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Letters illustrative of the Reign of William III from 1696 to 1708
addressed to the Duke of Shrewsbury in three volumes

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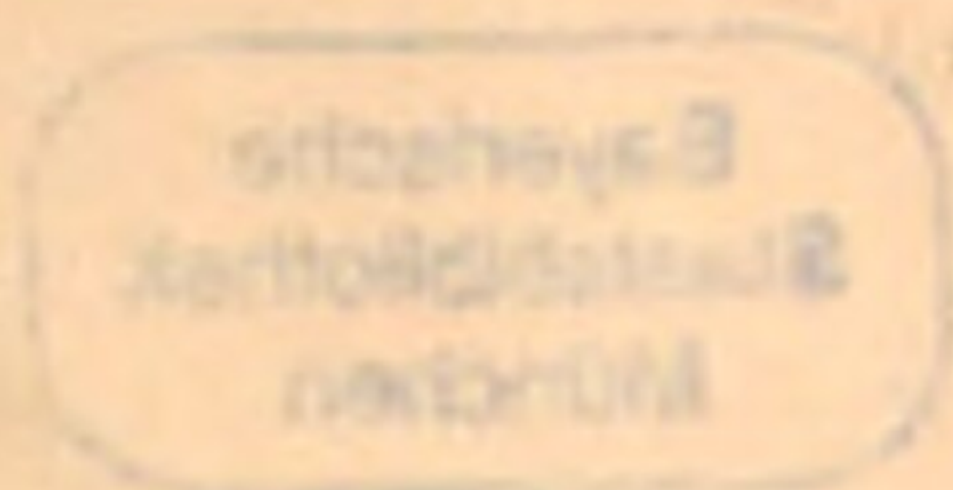


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LETTERS
ILLUSTRATIVE OF
THE REIGN OF WILLIAM III.

VOL. III.



LETTER 2

REIGN OF WILLIAM III.

FROM 1689 TO 1702

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AND THE REIGN OF WILLIAM IV.

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LETTERS

ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE

REIGN OF WILLIAM III.

FROM 1696 TO 1708.

ADDRESSED TO

THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY,

BY

JAMES VERNON, Esq.

SECRETARY OF STATE.

NOW FIRST PUBLISHED FROM THE ORIGINALS.

EDITED BY

G. P. R. JAMES, Esq.

AUTHOR OF "MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF LOUIS THE FOURTEENTH,"
"RICHELIEU," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES,

VOL. III.

LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN, PUBLISHER,
GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1841.

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FROM 1689 TO 1702.

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THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

JAMES ARNOLD, Esq.

OF THE BARRS.

WITH A PREFACE BY THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

LONDON:

G. R. H. JAMES, Esq.

PRINTED BY W. WILCOCKSON, ROLLS BUILDINGS, FETTER LANE.

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LETTERS

ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE

REIGN OF WILLIAM III.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

April 2, 1700.

The House sat yesterday till near ten at night, upon the Bill of Irish Forfeitures. Many clauses were offered again, by way of rider, and some were accepted the fore part of the day; one was for raising 6,000*l.* out of the Earl of Clancarty's estate, for his three sisters, which was a great deal more than the grantee would ever have given them. Another clause was in favour of the Duke of Ormond, that he should have the debts owing by his ancestors to any forfeiting person; which Mr. Harcourt (who brought it in) valued not above 5,000*l.* The clause was intended to be more comprehensive, and to reserve to him all the forfeitures within his county palatine of Tipperary, and a sum of money was to be added to it; but they doubted the success of any great attempt, and brought their

clause within a compass to be passed. Many clauses that had been rejected upon the report of the bill, were now turned into riders ; but they had no better luck than before.

They proceeded, yesterday, so far as to make an amendment in the body of the bill, which excluded all other clauses. The commissioners' names were filled up. Sir Cyrill Wyche being put at the head of them, by reason he had been one of the Lords Justices.

The King's answer to the address being reported in the morning, the House resolved to wait on his Majesty again, and return him thanks. The Irish bill was passed this day, and ordered to be sent up to the Lords ; which will be done to-morrow.

We have, likewise, agreed upon the number and qualifications of the Commissioners of Accounts. They are to be but five ; and no member of the House is capable of it,—so that Mr. How's project is disappointed in that particular. The balloting is put off till Friday. I expected we should make an end by Saturday, and the business we have before us might be brought within that compass ; but we have a strong rumour that the Lords will reject the Irish Bill, or make amendments in it, which amounts to the same thing.

It cannot be denied, but they have great reasons to except against it, especially considering the gratifications we have taken upon us to bestow, which might justly provoke both the King and them ; yet,

on the other side, I am not able to see what will be the consequences of throwing out a bill that carries with it the whole supply for the next year. Let the reasons be what they will for rejecting it, the blame is like to be laid upon favourites, and those who have an interest in the grants; and it is not to be imagined but this bill will be renewed whenever the opportunity is given, and be so framed as to bear still harder on the grantees.

By what I can perceive, our affairs are at a strange crisis. They seem to have a natural tendency to confusion; and I shall think it a miracle, if any good come of it.

I find some of our leading men wish this bill may miscarry, though they express themselves about it with great caution, unless it be to those they have great confidence in. My Lord Chancellor, in all probability, will not be present when this comes to be determined. He has been ill of a cold since Saturday, and my Lord Bridgewater supplies his place, and is like to do so this week, for I hear my Lord Chancellor is advised to take a little country air.

There is a notion as if the Tories would be pacified, though this bill were thrown out, upon condition that the Whigs be discarded; and, on the other side, the Whigs may think it an opportunity for strengthening their interest with the King; if they can support the rejecting of the bill, and after that carry on the public business; but if these are the thoughts

of both parties, one side is like to be very violent, and I don't know but a majority may run that way. I think the Tories can never compound at the price of those forfeitures, and the Whigs will not be able to defend them against the claim laid to them on behalf of the public ; but perhaps they may counterwork one another, till ruin is brought upon all sides.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

April 4, 1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 30th past and 1st inst. I am not able to tell your Grace, whether the King will go to Newmarket next week or not ; the appearance is rather that he will not, since we don't yet know what will become of the Irish Bill. It was carried up to the House of Lords yesterday and read the first time. My Lord Haversham fired against it, as a bill fit to be rejected. My Lord Privy Seal did not quite go so far, though he found great fault with it. My Lord Normanby and my Lord Halifax, were the promoters of a second reading ; it was not then ordered, but the debate thereof was adjourned till this day. My Lord Stamford and Lord Ferrers, joined themselves to-day with those who were for rejecting the bill. My Lord Steward opposed it, and my Lord Wharton spoke in a middle way that the passing such a bill was a great imposition on the peerage,

and the rejecting it might be followed with other great inconveniences; that many things were fit to be altered in the bill, if it could be attained to, and many that spoke for a second reading, argued as if it might be mended. After all there was a division whether it should be read a second time, which was carried in the affirmative by 70 against 23. Lords Haversham, Stamford, Ferrers, Anglesey, were for rejecting it: but it was read and committed: to-morrow they go into a committee upon it. It is said that they are resolved to make amendments; but whether they will stand to them afterwards, is not so certain. It is sure the House of Commons will fly into a heat upon it, and come into no conferences in the ——*; they are more like to threaten impeachments, and if the bill is to be made over again, it will be made much worse for the grantees.

The King was saying to-day, that if any difference happened between the two Houses about this bill, he was sure you would not come up while that lasted, and he should not desire it. My Lord Chancellor is still ill, and forbears coming to the House. Lords Portland, Albermarle, and Jersey, voted for a second reading of the bill, perhaps they may do as much for the amendment: if they do, I wish they don't hear of it.

We have a report that the Old East India Company find fault with the Irish Bill, and think it is a way to get their own passed. There are such

* Word wanting.

intrigues on foot, that some must find themselves deceived, at least; I know not yet whose share it will fall to.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

April 6, 1700.

I had a letter yesterday from Captain Wynn, the Commander of the Advice Frigate, who was sent for Kidd, giving an account that he had brought him, and about thirty pirates more, with the plunder that had been recovered from them. The ship has unluckily missed the channel, and was at Lundy's Island in the Irish Channel, when the letters were writ. He says he will get about as soon as he can, but I wish he were here now before the Parliament rises; that they might take his examination, and determine what should be done with him.

If this fellow is to lie in prison the whole summer, one cannot tell what lesson he may be taught by winter; whereas, if he were examined by members immediately upon his arrival, the naked truth would appear, and some people's jealousies would be found groundless; but we are so near the end of a session, that we can't have so good an effect.

The Lords spent yesterday in a Committee upon the Irish Bill, but came to no determination: they had a division about postponing the preamble, in which my Lord Wharton talked of making an amend-

ment, for vacating the adjudications, and the reversals of outlawries, as being done in favour of Papists. There were 44 for postponing the clause, and 39 against it. They say, that those that were for postponing would be for an amendment. The court lords appeared the forwardest for hazarding the bill. The Duke of Bolton speeched that way, but my Lord Rochester was very calm, and laid all considerations before them. He did not think the adding the Irish Bill was a tack, and the resumptions might be grievous; yet this was a very particular case. The grantees could not but know that the Parliament had laid their hands upon these forfeitures, and designed them for the ease of the public; that if any amendments were to be made, he thought it should be in relation to the beneficial clauses the Commons had gratified particular persons with; but before they did it, they would consider what might be the consequences. It was easy to be foreseen, that if the bill were sent back with an amendment, the Commons would only assert their right to have these bills pass as they frame them, and would come to no further conference about it. If the amendment be insisted on, a prorogation or dissolution must ensue; and did they expect any other, but that the same bill, or a worse, would be sent them whenever they met again, and if it were their intention to reject that likewise, could it produce any thing but confusion?

The Lords, before they went into a committee,

resolved to receive no petitions. They are again this day in a committee upon the same bill, (my Lord Harbert in the chair). They had made no amendment when I came from thence, and I hope they will not; but that you will best understand from my Lord Marlborough, who said he would write to your Grace this evening.

I know not what advantage the favourites or grantees can propose to themselves by this bill's miscarrying. I think the Lords would not insist on any amendment they should make; they would only give the House of Commons an occasion of falling into a rage, and draw an impeachment upon the Earl of Albermarle, which Mr. How already threatens him with; and I believe my Lord Portland would not fare much better: those two, with my Lady Orkney, being supposed to have hardened the King against the bill. Nay, some say that my Lady Orkney has been trying whether the Tories could be induced to part with this bill, upon condition that my Lord Chancellor be obliged to part with the Seals. If any such offer has been made, it is a very extravagant one: it will engage nobody, but the ill impressions it will make on all sides is very visible.

I spoke of Kidd's arrival to Sir Edward Seymour, and other members of the House. I find if he were now here, they would reserve him to another session, as thinking it too late, at a close of a session, to enter upon that examination.

I have likewise seen my Lord Orford, and we agree in opinion, that the King should be moved to send a yacht to the Downs, to wait for Captain Wynn's arrival, and to bring up Kidd from on board him; that he should be sent for from Greenwich by a guard; that he be brought to Whitehall, and a Committee of the Council be appointed to meet immediately upon it, and take his examination; and that he then be committed for piracy to the Marshalsea, that being the Admiralty prison. I shall propose it to-morrow at the Council, but I will first speak to my Lord Chancellor, who has not stirred out all this week.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

April 9 and 13, 1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 6th. I suppose you would conclude, by the Saturday's letters, that the Newmarket journey is put off, and therefore I direct this to Heythorp.

As for Brown's madness, one has not time to think of it, there being so many people of greater consequence that are much madder than he. I wish his Majesty were less influenced by them, and had not given into their delusions. My Lord Privy Seal* and my Lord Wharton have been the great instruments in stirring up the lords to make the amend-

* Lord Lonsdale.

ments in the bill. The Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord President* came blindly into it, as supposing the King had some scheme in reserve for carrying on the public business; but what passed yesterday in the House of Commons was enough to convince them, one may sometimes be positive without any foundation; but before I go to those particulars, I must make some mention of Kidd.

I told you, in my last, that I would speak to my Lord Chancellor about him, which I did on Sunday morning, and he approved of what has already been mentioned, that a yacht should be sent to the Downs for bringing him up; that the marshal of the Admiralty, as being the proper officer, should take him into custody in the Downs, and a messenger was likewise to go along with him to take care that nobody spoke with Kidd; and as soon as he was brought to town, the Cabinet Council should be summoned and meet *de die in diem*, till they had fully examined him, and taken it down in writing.

Since I am speaking of my Lord Chancellor, I ought to acquaint your Grace, that I thought he looked pretty well. We talked a little of the bill, he said it would be very strange if the Lords had made so great a step, without knowing what would be the consequences of it. He would have me believe that having been so ill, he had not thought at all of it; he complained of the hard treatment he had met with, and thought it better to live in Poland

* Lord Pembroke.

than in this country. By this one may imagine he has no intention of keeping the seals, and what has happened since will hardly inspire him with other thoughts.

The scheme we had laid about Kidd is overturned : I told it to his Majesty before he went to the Cabinet Council, who approved of it, but said I must acquaint the House with it the next morning. I answered, that I was afraid they had cut out other work for that day, and I did not know but they would look upon this information as an artifice to divert them, which would rather have an ill effect with them : however when my Lord Jersey read his letter from Captain Wynn, who has Kidd on board, and thereupon received his Majesty's directions to write to the Admiralty about sending a yacht and their marshal for him, I was commanded at the same time to give an account of it to the House, which I did accordingly, yesterday. I had no sooner done it, but Colonel Churchill rises up and tells the House, that the Admiralty, upon the directions they had received from my Lord Jersey, had ordered a yacht to the Downs, but their board were under a difficulty how to behave themselves when Kidd was brought up. Some of them thought (which was my Lord Haversham, though he did not name him) that they ought not to commit him till they had first taken his examination.

The House thought there was some trick at first in laying this before them, and I thought they would

have taken no notice of it at all, and certainly they would not if Churchill had not been talking with some of them beforehand ; at last, Harley said, the examination ought not to be left to any that were suspected as an accomplice of the crime. Sir Christopher Musgrave said, if the House were sitting when Kidd arrived he ought to be brought to their bar ; or, in the interval of Parliament, if an examination were taken, it should be by the Admiralty, who had him in custody, and his papers ought to be in their hands.

Every body else, therefore, must now look upon himself as discharged from having any thing more to do in that matter.

Then the House proceeded to the consideration of what the Lords had done with their bill. That whole day's debate was managed by Mr. How, Mr. Harley, Mr. Harcourt, Sir Ed. Seymour, Sir Bartlemy Shower, and Sir Christopher Musgrave, very few besides speaking in it. They laid open the ruin that was coming upon the nation by the Lords' obstinacy ; that it was their duty, as Englishmen, to acquit themselves to their country, whatever befel them ; they were to discharge their trusts, and leave the event to Providence, which had wrought great deliverances for the nation, which now seemed nearer to a precipice than it ever had been ; they were at the brink of seeing the army disbanded, since by the Bill of Rights, it could not subsist longer than they provided for it ; the fleet would be left without any

thing to support it; the public credit would be destroyed; the faith of Parliament would be bankrupt, they having allowed 300,000*l.* to be borrowed, which they are not permitted to repay. The whole nation must be exposed to misery, and all for preserving the grants of those who would beggar the kingdom to enrich themselves; who were foreigners, and had not the bowels of Englishmen, but would be contented to see this country destroyed, when they are not to get their wills of it; they had been assisted by a servile corrupt ministry, who, for a share of the plunder, had been the tools to foreigners, and served them in all their rapines. Sir Edward Seymour named my Lord Chancellor as one that was more to blame than all the rest. He reflected on him for his judgment in the bankers' case, and for his religion, that he was a Hobbist.

They went on to order that the report of the Irish Commissioners should be printed, together with their votes against the advisers and procurers of grants, with the King's answer to it, and their resolutions upon that answer, that whoever advised it did his utmost to create a misunderstanding between the King and his people.

It is likewise ordered to print their resolution in April, 1690, laying claim to the forfeited estates, with his Majesty's speech in January, 1690,* wherein he promises not to dispose of those forfeitures till it had been considered of in Parliament.

They likewise passed the vote which miscarried

* So written in the manuscript.

before, that the passing or procuring exorbitant grants by any Privy Councillor to his own use, was a high crime and misdemeanour ; only, Major Stringer and Sir William Cowper got it added, that it should be the like crime in any one who was a Privy Councillor, in any reign.

All these votes passed, *nemine contradicente*. When they were over, the Bill came down from the Lords, with the amendments, which were read as usually.

One was for leaving out the clause about the Commissioners of Excise. The other two were riders ; one was about remainders, and that the trustees could give no better a title than the King should have by the forfeitures*. The other rider is said to be my Lord Privy Seal's, in relation to the beneficial clauses added by the Commons,—that the persons should have no advantage by them till the King entitled them to it by letters patent under the great seal of Ireland.

These amendments were disagreed to, *nemine contradicente*, and a committee was immediately to draw up the reasons for it, to be delivered to the Lords at a conference.

The House sat till Sir Edward Seymour returned and made a report of the reasons resolved on by the committee, which were in the form used on these occasions,—that parliamentary aids were the sole gift of the Commons, that they had the sole right of appointing the uses, limitations, and qualifications of those aids, and that the Lords could not change or

* I leave this as I find it, though it seems to have no meaning.—ED.

alter the same, — that this was so undoubtedly their right, that they must think it a lessening of it if they suffered it to be brought into question, and therefore they must leave the bill and the amendments with their Lordships, together with the consequences that would attend the not passing this bill.

These reasons being agreed to, my Lord Hartington was appointed to go to the Lords and desire a conference, but they were not then sitting.

The House proceeded to resolve, that on Wednesday next they would take the Irish Bill and their votes into consideration, intimating that they must do themselves right by impeachments since resump-tions never passed without them. Some were for doing it next day, but they chose rather to see what the Lords would do in the meantime ; they say they must not rest till the English grants are torn from those who so little deserve them.

The names of the Privy Councillors were ordered to be brought, and all members ordered to attend.

My Lord Hartington went to the Lords this day, to desire a conference, which was appointed immediately. Sir Edward Seymour delivered the reasons of the Commons at that conference ; and when he made the report of it to the House, he told them if he could judge by the countenances of the Lords, they would have a good effect of their bill ; but this good news was contradicted within half-an-hour, an account being brought us that the Lords had

insisted. There was a division upon it, 47 being for insisting, and 34 against it, which struck a great damp in the House, and I know not what resolutions we should have taken, but soon after, it was whispered about by some that came from the Lords, that there was still a prospect of complying with us, if we would give an opportunity for it by another conference; and in order to do it, it was thought advisable that we should rise before the Lords sent their reasons for insisting. Accordingly, Mr. Harley moved that the House should adjourn till to-morrow, which was immediately consented to; there will be so far an easiness on our side, as to have a conference, though, perhaps, it will be only to tell the Lords that we adhere; and if they come off from their amendments, we may have peace and quietness a little longer; or otherwise I see nothing but confusion to ensue.

My Lord Sunderland takes great pains to prevent a rupture, and has been all along barefaced for passing the bill, and if he succeeds he will do the King great service in it, and will return into confidence with him, (I hope for the public benefit), though it has been interrupted by his crossing the present humour and inclination at Kensington. My Lord Wharton, on the other side, has played a strange game, none has been so earnest as he for making the amendments, and has pressed all the Lords to stick to them; and yet, after all, he is gone this morning early to Newmarket. Some foresaw he would

play this trick, and now he is railed at in both Houses.

My Lord Albermarle came not to the House of Lords to-day till after the question was over, but he declared he came on purpose to vote for the bill without the amendments. I hope, therefore, every body is now more at liberty to act as they think best for the common safety.

My Lord Marlborough went away on Saturday before the question ; I believe he has not been at the House since.

Mr. Montague has been with the King to-day, to represent what he thinks will be the fatal consequences of breach between the two Houses.

Lord Orford, and Lord Tankerville, have all along voted for the bill, and yet the Whigs are suspected to have encouraged the opposition underhand ; but I hope they are clear of it, for it could not but prove a dangerous project.

The saying in town is, that three B's are for rejecting the Bill, and embroiling the nation ; viz. the bishops, beggars, and bastards.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

April 11, 1700.

I come now from Kensington, where I received his Majesty's commands to acquaint your Grace that he would go to-morrow se'nnight to Hampton

Court, to settle there. I suppose your Grace will not be long before you wait on him. He expects you will be in the same lodgings where you were, which he says he shall have no occasion for, for his own use.

The King dined to-day with the Duke of Somerset, who has been a great stickler against the bill. Those are the lords that will be in the highest favor till something else happens to alter it.

Notwithstanding our vote of last night, the Duke of Schomberg was this night at the Council. I shall be glad if nobody else takes notice of it.

Kidd is come into the Downs: my Lord Bridgewater tells me they expect him up to-morrow. I have a box of letters from my Lord Bellamont, and my Lord Jersey has another; we have resolved to carry both of them to the Admiralty Office to-morrow, and not to open them but in the presence of the Commissioners, and whatever papers there are relating to Kidd, they shall be left with them by schedules.*

Sir George Rooke is going to sea to command the squadron we are fitting out to join with the Dutch; whereby it is hoped we may be of some use towards appeasing the troubles in the north.

The King has ordered Mr. Attorney this evening to put the extract of the act passed this day against popery into a proclamation, and to require the justices

* This most extraordinary and undignified proceeding requires remark, as it afterwards involved the ministry in new quarrels amongst themselves.

of the peace and other magistrates to put it into execution.

His Majesty has likewise directed, in pursuance of the address of the House of Commons, that the commissions of the justices of the peace and deputy lieutenants be reviewed in council. To that end, I am directed to wait on my Lord Chancellor, for a list of all the justices, and letters will be writ from the council to the several lord lieutenants, that they send up the lists of their respective deputy lieutenants.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

April 11, 1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 8th, God be thanked the session is now well over, and we are prorogued to the 23rd of May. We were in great apprehensions yesterday that the bill would have miscarried in the House of Lords. The Lords sent to demand a conference, at which they delivered their reasons for insisting. They filled a whole sheet of paper, and were well drawn up, but I have not a copy of them.

Sir Edward Seymour read them at the bar, and they were brought to the table ; but not read there. The House came readily in to ask another conference of the Lords, which was to be a free conference, but the managers were directed only to acquaint the Lords that we insisted for the reasons that had

been already laid before them. After this some young Member began to move for impeachments, upon their votes, and named the Earl of Portland, and the Earl of Albermarle.

About the same time, the Earl of Jersey sent for me out of the House to tell me he was just come from Kensington, and had prevailed with the King, that he might speak to the Archbishop and some other Lords to desist from the amendments. This being communicated about the House, it abated our heat, but soon after we had the dismal news that the Lords had adhered, which struck us all with consternation, and I believe there was not one man in the House that did not think the nation ruined.

The fact, as it appeared afterwards, was thus : of the Lords that were present there were 40 for agreeing against 37, but the proxies being next counted, it made the number even. By the rules of the House the question should have passed in the negative, but a question arising how that was to be understood, whether for adhering to the amendments, or to the bill, some of the Bishops going away, it was carried by 5 to pass the bill without any amendment, and it was signified accordingly by a message to the Commons. While the report lasted that the bill was lost, the outward door of the lobby was ordered to be locked up, and no Members permitted to stir out.

Mr. Harley laid open the deplorable state the nation was brought to, that the army was disbanded, that credit was broke, that the Exchequer Bills must

swallow up the Civil List. He proposed a declaratory vote that the army should be no longer kept up, since it was contrary to their Bill of Civil Rights, and recommended it to the House to consider what further resolutions they should take in the inquiry.

Mr. How said it was time to lay aside all animosities among themselves, whatever fault they had found, meaning among the ministry. They should now remember we were all Englishmen, and in a common calamity. Every body would exert themselves alike, for preserving their liberty and their country, if there was any way left for it.

After the Lords had sent the message that the bill was passed, then they began to change their note, and said they were glad the danger was over. But they must now take care that they did not fall into the like hereafter, which would be unavoidable if they did not secure themselves against an ill ministry, and the influence of foreigners. It soon appeared that their aim was at my Lord Chancellor, and they thought there was a disposition in the House to have overwhelmed anybody that was named.

Sir Bartlemy Shower moved that the vote should be read against Privy Councillors passing grants to themselves. Then the list of the Privy Council was ordered to be read. Next they proceeded upon them one by one. At my Lord Chancellor's name a long debate arose, and all the great men on that side spoke with a warmth against him ; that his grant was exorbitant, that his ministry was partial and oppressive ;

that the ill answers they had received from the throne proceeded from his advice, and that it was not to be doubted but that he was the promoter of the opposition the Lords had given the bill.

Mr. Cowper made a very handsome defence of my Lord, and gave very genteel and satisfactory answers to every thing that had been alleged.

Charles Godolphin was as bitter as any body. He instanced some persons my Lord had recommended to employments in the Custom House, by which means he said the public had lost 20,000*l.* by their unskilfulness and neglects. Mr. Smith told him if that had been so, it would have become him to let the Treasury know it, but this was the first time they ever heard it ; and Sir Walter Young said those places were inconsiderable, but Mr. Godolphin was displeased that the persons he would have recommended to them were not received.

My Lord Hartington, Sir Wm. Blacket, and Mr. Norton spoke in my Lord Chancellor's behalf. The question proposed by Sir John Leveson was for impeaching my Lord ; but Sir Christopher Musgrave turned it into an address, for removing him from the King's presence and councils for ever, which being put, was rejected by 167 against 106. Some of them said afterwards, they did not value that question, since they expected the same effect by his voluntarily retiring. In that, perhaps, they will not be mistaken.

They would have gone on upon the list of Privy

Councillors, but that the Duke of Leeds stood in their way. At the reading his name, Major Stringer desired the paper that lay upon the table might be read, which gave an account of his grants and pensions to the value of 5500*l.* per annum. We were willing that he and the rest should drop, and moved the adjourning, which I thought by our great majority should have fallen. But it seems some of our own people had a mind to have a fling at the foreigners, so they carried it by eleven for proceeding.

Then my Lord Hartington grounding his own motion upon the forwardness the foreigners had shown to embroil them with the Lords, proposed an address for removing them from his Majesty's councils. It was afterwards added, that they should be removed from the councils, both in England and in Ireland, which was done to comprehend my Lord Galway, perhaps as a gratification to the Duke of Ormond.

In the English council, your Grace knows that there is only the Duke of Schomberg and the Earl of Portland. Though this last never comes thither, yet it was done for his sake. The vote passed, he having been very busy in stirring up the Lords to reject the bill, and persisted in it to the last, which my Lord Albermarle did not, as to the soliciting part; though he voted for the adhering, which the House did not then know, or otherwise, I believe, they would have insisted more on a second question

proposed, wherein he was concerned, which was, that none but such as have been born subjects of his Majesty should be employed in the troops. It was bandied about some time, but the leading men thought they had done enough, and let the question of adjournment be put, which was carried.

The King designed coming to the House yesterday. Colonel Godfrey had private orders by six in the morning to have the crown and robes in readiness. Perhaps it was then expected the bill would have been thrown out; but if he had come as soon as that bill was passed, it would have prevented the address about my Lord Portland and Lord Galway, which you may be sure he dislikes.

I know not whether my Lord Jersey omitted to desire the Lords would sit, or they refused it; but the King was at the Cockpit when he was told the Lords were up.

I hear some of the lords were offended that my Lord Jersey should pretend to influence them by a message, and nobody changed sides except himself and Lord Romney. The dissenting Bishops, as I mentioned before, went away. My Lord Marlborough came to the House that day, who had not been at any question before. The Bishop of Salisbury was zealous for passing the bill, and had liked to be called to the bar, for crying out, when my Lord Anglesey spoke the other way, "*stuff! stuff!*" The King came pretty early to the House to-day for preventing any more angry votes in the House

of Commons; but there was no such intention, every one waiting patiently for the summons of the Black Rod. The King passed every bill that was offered him, to the number of sixty, and the Old Company's Bill among the rest, which will discontent the interested Whigs, both in the city and in the House.

The King made them no speech at parting; I know not how that will be interpreted when they meet again. But he could not bring himself to thank them for a bill he had such exceptions to, and the suppressing of thanks would have been more taken notice of, if he had spoke.

My Lord Jersey was lately with my Lord Chancellor. I imagine it was to have his thoughts about a speech; but I suppose he has declined meddling in it.

I believe the King will be going very soon to Hampton Court. Perhaps when I wait on him next, he may say something to me about your Grace's coming thither. I shall wish it may not be long deferred. It is fit some person he confides in, and who has not been concerned in these late differences, should be about him, to bring him out of his uneasiness, and to moderate, if there be occasion, the warmth of some hot spirits, who perhaps may put too great a value upon their services in maintaining this contest.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

April 13, 1700.

The King asked me yesterday morning, whether I had given your Grace notice that he would go to Hampton Court on Friday, and whether I had mentioned that he intended to reside there; by which you will understand, that he would be glad to see you there as soon as it will suit with your convenience.

My Lord Jersey and I went yesterday to the Admiralty Board, and carried our boxes of papers, that we had received from my Lord Bellamont. All the Commissioners were there except my Lord Bridgewater, who was called away upon particular business. My Lord Jersey staying beyond the time appointed, the boxes were not opened till the Admiralty bid their waiters to do it. I desired the letters directed to me might be read publicly, in which my Lord Bellamont gives an account of his sending over Kidd, and that he had consigned his effects to me; the Lords of the Treasury had writ to him about them, but had made no mention to whom the goods should be delivered here. It seems Sir Edward Harrison (as he writes) would have the goods put into his hands; and some other body writ to him, he says, but he does not name who, that the goods should be sent to me, and he rather chose that. He says something about recommending it to my Lord Chancellor and myself, that care should be taken to

obtain a grant of these effects ; since Kidd would be found guilty of piracy, and then they should lose all the charge they were at in fitting out the Adventure galley. He writes with some sort of jealousy of Sir Edward Harrison, as if he aimed to get these things into his hands, to secure himself a greater portion than belonged to him, and talks as if he had made a hard bargain with him about their shares. He calls it giving him a Presbyterian gripe. He adds, likewise, he wonders how any in the House of Commons could find fault with so harmless a design.

These are the most remarkable passages in the letter, which to be sure he did not intend for public view. I wish there had not been that necessity for it, which the last (and as I think) unnecessary bringing this matter into the House of Commons has occasioned. He might have considered upon what occasion he was writing, and under what circumstances, which made it very improper to show any appetite for those goods, though whatever reflection there is on it, it ought only to be upon himself ; and any judges that have the least candour would acquit him, since it is apparent that he has sent every thing that was seized, either with Kidd or any other of the pirates, without retaining to the value of a farthing. What he has sent he reckons at 20,000*l.*, and says he is informed the law allows him one-third of what is seized from a pirate. He has likewise sent Kidd's commission, instructions, and articles of contract with him ; these are not in the boxes, but

the lieutenant whom he sent over in the ship says, they are on board in the strong box, where the gold and jewels are put up.

There was a letter in my box to your Grace; Sir David Mitchell would have had it sent to you unopened, but I took upon me to say, you would rather it should be opened there. I know not what construction my Lord Haversham would have made of it, if it had been otherwise. It was but a short letter complimenting you upon the Chamberlain's Staff, and saying he had sent you a white beaver's skin, which is reckoned a great rarity, and I think there is besides a dozen bottles of some extraordinary water. He does likewise take notice, that if there be not a new grant procured of Kidd's goods, the charges would be lost; but he only touches upon it.

There were other letters in my parcel directed to Sir Edmund * Harrison, and Sir John Stanley; perhaps in those he is fuller about the grant that runs in his head. They were not opened, the persons concerned not being present, but the Admiralty intend to give them notice that such letters are lying there for them, and when they appear they will be opened and read.

In my Lord Jersey's box were packets for my Lord Chancellor, the Lords of the Treasury, and the Commissioners of the Trade, which are left un-

* I find this name written Edmund or Edward in the MS. submitted to me.

opened, and they will write to the respective persons about them.

We have delivered all up by a schedule, upon which Mr. Burchett, the Secretary gives us a receipt.

I waited on my Lord Chancellor to-day to acquaint him with what was done yesterday, and I had scarce made an end, when my Lord Haversham came in, whom I gave place to. My Lord received a letter from the Admiralty to acquaint him they had his packet from my Lord Bellamont; but, as I understood him, he intends to leave the packet in their hands without sending any of his servants to see it opened.

The King went yesterday to Hampton Court and returns this evening. Neither my Lord Sunderland nor my Lord Marlborough have been seen of late, but I hope calmer thoughts will now take place.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

April 16, 1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 13th, and shall take the first opportunity of letting the King know your intentions of waiting on him; perhaps by next post you may resolve on the day you will be at Hampton Court. Your Grace will then judge whether your present resolutions of

quitting should abate or be strengthened. I think you ought not to be induced to it from any thing you have to apprehend in relation to yourself. If there be any such thing as respect kept up among us, I am confident you have as good a share of it from all parties. I wish I could as truly say that your employment was worth your attendance, or that you might promise yourself satisfaction by sitting at the helm in so tempestuous a sea. I think the King is now pretty well out of the disturbance the last week or fortnight gave him, and seems well disposed to do what is best for future quiet ; but what, is the difficulty to find out.

I am still in the dark as to what my Lord Chancellor intends to do : he does not yet stir abroad, and by what I hear he is very reserved in this particular ; but I imagine he will either see the King, or they will find some other way to know one another's mind before the King goes to Hampton Court. In the mean time, I find myself under my Lord Chancellor's displeasure in a matter where I thought I had done nothing to incur it. I have acquainted you with all that passed last week in the House of Commons in relation to Kidd, and by whom he was to be examined, and how I thought myself obliged, for my own vindication, and the justification of all that were concerned, to conceal nothing from the Admiralty that came to my hands, and to do it in the frankest manner, that no room might be left for doubts. This I hear my Lord

Chancellor disapproves of,* and thinks the examination of Kidd should still go in the way it was first designed by the Cabinet Council.

I know not whether my Lord Haversham instilled this into him, whom I left there on Saturday, but Mr. Montague took an occasion to go with my Lord Jersey to Kensington on Sunday, and told him that wrong steps had been made in this matter which were fit to be rectified. My Lord Jersey promised him it should be laid before the King at the Cabinet, that he might make what observations upon it he thought fit. I knew nothing of all this at that time, and was a little surprised to hear my Lord Jersey begin the relation, but was then obliged to continue it, to show how one thing brought on another. Mr. Montague made answer to it, that he was not in the House when the motions began about Kidd; what he heard of it was towards the latter end, and then he said people spoke as if it did not belong to them to give any directions at all; or if any particular persons had delivered it as their opinion that the Admiralty should take the examinations and be possessed of the papers, yet that was no order of the House, and nobody was bound to observe it. He concluded as if the examination should still be referred to the Council.

I said such an order I thought would now be too late, for I had just then received a letter from my Lord Bridgewater to excuse his not coming to

* As well he might.

Council, by reason he was then actually engaged with the rest of the Admiralty in the examination of Kidd. So that matter fell, and I can't but believe it was well it did so, for there could not have been so speedy and so good end made of it as the way it is gone.

I saw Sir George Rooke yesterday morning, who tells me they had Kidd before them from four in the afternoon till eleven at night; that they had gone through his examination, which was reduced into writing, and they sealed it up, every one of the Commissioners putting their seal to it, and so it is to remain till the meeting of Parliament: they committed Kidd to Newgate that night.

Sir George says the account Kidd has given will not be very satisfactory to the House of Commons, since it is not what they looked for. He tells his story no otherwise than it was opened to the House, that he was employed for the seizing of pirates whom he had given an account of, that they were gone from the West Indies towards the Red Sea; only as to his own committing piracy he would excuse himself that his seamen forced him to what was done. He gave a plain account who were his owners, and what the fitting out the ship cost; but he said he never saw either my Lord Chancellor or your Grace; he had been once with my Lord Romney, but oftener with my Lord Orford, and had been alone with him. I perceive that question was asked, but I suppose the answer was of no moment. He said my Lord Bellamont brought him one day

to your Grace's office. His Lordship then had the proposal in his hand, he saw him speak to me, but he could not tell what either of us said. I believe it might be so, for I remember to have seen him once, but had no discourse with him.

In his pocket was found the original instruction given him by my Lord Bellamont, and signed by his Lordship, which I understand to be no more than a sailing order. He says the treasure he brought in the sloop to New England was worth about 30,000*l.*, but part of it was embezzled by those who got it into their hands, but acquits my Lord Bellamont from having kept any part of it.

If this be the substance of the examination, as I believe it is, I would fain know whether any man ought to be dissatisfied that it has been taken by persons whom nobody will suspect for partiality in this case, and whether if the Council had done it, it should not be thought mysterious all the summer, and been questioned in the winter.

My Lord Romney kept a stir with me about a letter he said that came under my cover, and the Admiralty had sent to him about it, but it seems his letter was from Kidd, who likewise writ another to my Lord Orford: he had writ these letters on board the yacht. I suppose the Marshal had brought them to the Admiralty. I don't know that they have been opened, neither of the Lords concerning themselves about them. I imagine the fellow would make them believe he was innocent, and recommend

himself to their protection. Sir George Rooke tells me as if my Lord Chancellor would not let any of his servants come to the board to see his letter opened, but sent some slighting answer that they might do what they would with it.

I find they have opened that letter, and my Lord Bellamont has rather writ more inconsiderately in it than he did to me, but after the same strain, his head being full of a new grant, and railing at the House of Commons for making so much bustle about nothing. He has an expression about Jack How, that his venom is not only in his breath.

Sir John Stanley too has a letter upon the same subject, all of them will show there was nothing ill meant originally, but it is unlucky and ridiculous he should give his fancy such a range upon that occasion. I wish the House of Commons would not have the curiosity to hear such stuff, but however that happens I must still think that the putting the letters into the hands of the Admiralty was unavoidable, as the case was circumstanced. I am sure I could have none but a good intention in it. If it be an error, I shall be glad to resign to those who commit none.

I endeavoured to wait on my Lord Chancellor to-day to satisfy him I had acted as far as my prudence was capable to instruct me; and as to my integrity in it I should urge no more; but this I ventured upon even when your Lordship was concerned, and presumed it was the best service I

could do you. I was told my Lord Chancellor had gone out in the morning, and would not be at home till night. Since he begins to go abroad, I suppose he will see the King before Friday. I spoke with Mr. Montague on this subject, who owned to me my Lord Chancellor was much disturbed at the examination going to the Admiralty; but hearing how it is gone off, he thinks it is for the best. I said something to him likewise about ill-grounded jealousies and suspicions that the best men give too much way to, and thereby create uneasinesses to themselves and others. He thought there was great occasion for it in many instances. Lord Sunderland and Lord Marlborough will have much to do to set themselves right with them, and Charles Godolphin's speech casts shades upon his brother, though those who know any thing of him, must know he is more fantastic and ungovernable than a mule.

It seems Kidd's commission and articles are not yet before the Admiralty; they are in the strong box that is still on board the frigate.

Sir Edward Seymour is gone to Ireland to improve his son's estate. He was resolved to take his leave of the King before he went, and accordingly he came to the King's dinner on Sunday. This has filled the town with discourse; and the King said he should be one of those that would draw conclusions from it, if he were less assured that his coming thither was as much a surprise to him, as it

could be to any body else, his not having the least expectation or imagination of it. At the time of dinner he joined in the discourse about hunting; when the King rose from the table he advanced towards him, and told him he thought it his duty to kiss his hand before he went to Ireland. The King wished him a good journey. Then Sir Edward congratulated his Majesty upon his late deliverance. The King answered he did not know whether that was to be a matter of joy, nor did he know whether he ought to be very well satisfied with Sir Edward's behaviour during the session, though he understood he was grown calmer the last day; that it was to no purpose to remember what was past, but to look forward, and he hoped they should be better friends at another meeting of the Parliament. Sir Edward answered like a prince, "Sir, I make no doubt of it," and then kneeled down and kissed his hand, which ended their conversation.

The Scotch Secretaries have advice from Darien, that their countrymen are settled there ever since the middle of November last. They found every thing as they left it, the Spaniards having demolished nothing; they are now more in number, and better provided than they were at first, and there let them ever stay till the Spaniards can dislodge them. Perhaps the news comes seasonable enough against the meeting of Parliament in Scotland.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Sunday Noon.*

I have the honour of your Grace's letter, and have shewed it to the King. He would be glad to see you before you go into the country, and it may be either to-morrow morning, or to-morrow in the evening, as you think fit.

I believe it would be a great satisfaction to him if you could resolve upon going to Ireland, though it need not be declared, but at what time you think fit.

The two Chief Justices and the Chief Baron are to be here this afternoon, to have the custody of the great seal committed to them. It will not rest long in their hands, the King being sensible of the

* This and the following letter are without date, but it is evident they must have been written on the 5th and 8th of May, 1700. Between the first of these and the letter which precedes it in this collection a lapse of three weeks is apparent, during which some of the most important events of William's reign had occurred. The first of these was the dismissal of the famous Lord Somers. At him the whole arrows of faction had been discharged during the session, and both for his own sake, and that of the country, William judged it best that he should resign. William had, certainly, great and just cause of complaint against his ministry for the divided, neglectful, and pusillanimous manner in which they had conducted the business of the State during the two last sessions of Parliament; but he endeavoured to persuade Somers to resign by very friendly means in the first place. The great minister, however, would not quail to his enemies, and at length the King sent for the Seals by Lord Jersey, on the 17th of April. About that very period, Shrewsbury again visited the Court, and laboured, but laboured in vain, to produce an amalgamation of the heterogeneous political materials which there appeared.

necessity of appointing a Keeper. It seems to me as if Sir John Powell were not like to be the man. My Lord Privy Seal has been with the King to-day, to ask leave that he may go to Bath for the recovery of his health, and talks of going on Wednesday next.

I shall go to London this afternoon, but the King has bid me to be here again on Tuesday. If your Grace lies here to-morrow night, I shall have an opportunity, perhaps, of receiving your commands.

We are to have no Cabinet Council this evening.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Wednesday, 10 o'clock.

Being with my Lord Sunderland this morning, I understood by him that your Grace was very much out of order yesterday, and not like to leave Hampton Court so soon as you expected. He had a great desire to speak with your Grace in relation to my Lord Chancellor, but having no opportunity, he has told me what he would have proposed to you, about a method to be used for restoring the seals to my Lord Chancellor. I know not how practicable it is, but I told him I would communicate it to you, if I had the honour of seeing you to-morrow at Hampton Court.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 9 and 10, 1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter, and am glad you did not stay at Hampton Court, since it agrees no better with you, and you may as well consider of the proposal at Woborne, which is this—

That the seals should be put into the hands of Commissioners, such as my Lord Somers, if he thinks fit, shall name for it, who are to resign whenever his Lordship shall think it proper to take the seals. It will be left to him to consider whether he will take them before the next session of Parliament be over, that the same ill ferment may not shew itself again on his account, especially while the matter of Kidd is depending. If this be approved of, it is intended to keep it secret, with all the care imaginable, that neither the King's business may be obstructed, nor my Lord Somers be made uneasy, with the old unreasonable jealousies on his account, and in the meantime, that all things continue as they are, without displacing any body yet. If it be approved of, means may be used to soften some tempers and dispose them to be more moderate next winter, or to let that alone if it be disliked.

This, my Lord Sunderland says, he has as yet mentioned to nobody, nor will he till he knows your thoughts upon it. If you gave into it, he believed you would discourse it with my Lord Wharton, or

Mr. Montague, and by them prevail with my Lord Somers. He is confident he can bring the King to it, and will lay out his utmost strength in it. He says it cannot be avoided, but my Lord Albermarle and Lord Jersey must know it, and that is all that will be privy to it at Court.

I made two objections to it; the first was, that I chiefly apprehended that my Lord Somers would not be prevailed with to return any more to his employment. The manner of the King's parting with him, the violence of his enemies, and the unsupportable fatigue of the place, would deter him from changing a quiet honourable retreat for a turbulent and unsafe condition. The next was, I doubted whether this would be kept as secret as it ought to be; and if that failed, it would have very ill-consequences; my Lord Somers would be more pushed at, and the King's affairs more embroiled than ever. I added a third thing, that if this should appear at first to be a scheme of his Lordship's, it would be received with great prejudice: it might be thought a trick, only to amuse the Whigs and keep them quiet the next session; besides, as some believe he was the author of my Lord Somers' removal, they would never expect he should deal sincerely with him, nor be willing he should have any merit in obliging him. To this he answered he could not help the hard censures he was under, but was sure he did not deserve them. He has never mentioned my Lord Somers but with esteem,

and nobody can be more convinced of what use it is to the King and the public that he should be at the head of the affairs, and that the administration should be in the hands of the Whigs.

He conceives the greatest difficulty will lie in the gaining of my Lord Somers's consent; but if your Grace thought well of the proposal, he believes it would succeed in every part, and he would not stir out of town till he saw it accomplished, whereas otherwise, he has designed going to Althorp on Wednesday next.

I shall take no notice of this to Mr. Montague or any body else. I find myself under my Lord Sunderland's circumstances, and apprehend myself so suspected, without knowing any cause I have given for it; that silence will best become me on all accounts.*

If your Grace finds this matter practicable, you will mention it to whom, and in what matter you think fit. If you disapprove of it, I suppose there is an end of it; and I wish any body else may find out a scheme that will more tend to our settlement.

* Whether Vernon did or did not offer to resign on the dismissal of Somers I do not know; but that there was a strong rumour thereof, is proved by Evelyn's Diary, where on the 24th of April, 1700, he mentions amongst the events of the preceding week, "Mr. Vernon, Secretary of State, was put out."

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 9 and 10, 1700, (Thursday, 8 at night).

When I writ to your Grace this morning, I had not seen my Lord Sunderland, nor did he know of my writing to you. I have been with him since I came back from Hampton Court. He wishes I had writ to you with more reserve and caution, being apprehensive of ill consequences if too early communication should be made either to my Lord Wharton or Mr. Montague. He now thinks that if your Grace should approve of the proposal, that nothing could be done in it effectually without your assistance, and must therefore stay till you see the King again. In the meantime, he hopes no mention has been made of it to any body, and he desires it may remain in your breast only, till he has an opportunity of discoursing with you about it. I told him that I thought if your Grace had taken any notice of it at all yet, you would forbear mentioning it as coming from him.

I perceive it would be a satisfaction to him if his name has been suppressed. I wish he may be at ease on that point, since he is almost afraid of his own project; for my part, I have none of those measures to keep, I am pretty indifferent who is offended or who is pleased, provided the public may be well served.

Mr. Attorney did not so much as attend the Council to-day; he and the Solicitor take it by

turns. The Attorney was till twelve o'clock last night at the King's Bench bar, upon another trial of the Earl of Bath, Pryde's title being set up against him.

I hear he declines taking the seals, notwithstanding all the persuasions that have been used.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May, 11, 1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 10th which has set my Lord Sunderland at ease, in a matter he apprehended might have miscarried if it took air too soon. He has now thought fit I should give you a further communication of it.

In the first place, he thinks it necessary to be understood, that it was always his notion that the King's business never could be so well carried on as by my Lord Chancellor, and his friends, and accordingly was always against my Lord's going out. The advice he gave to the King was, that he would enter frankly into the consideration of the present posture of his affairs with my Lord Chancellor, that he should engage my Lord to open his mind to him, and what methods he should propose for the carrying on the public business, that they should be pursued, and that the King would rely on his integrity and judgment, that he would propose nothing but what should be for the King's service, and carry the pros-

pect of a good issue. He never understood otherwise from the King but that he would take this method, and was very much surprised when he heard in what manner they had parted.* He had not seen the King for a fortnight before the bill passed, nor till a week afterwards, and then he found him extremely out of humour with him, for what he had done in relation to the bill. On the other side, when the seals were sent for, he finding himself charged with being the adviser of it, though he had not credit enough at that time to displace the most inconsiderable man in the kingdom; he thought it fit for him to retire into the country, and accordingly fixed his day for his journey, which he acquainted the King with on Tuesday last.

Since that my Lord Jersey has been with him, and tells him that the King is concerned at his resolution of going away, which he calls forsaking him in a time of difficulty; that on his part there should be no occasion given for it, since if he would stay the King would enter into as great a confidence with him as ever he did, and he would give him assurances of it, if he came to the Chapter of the Garter, Tuesday next. The answer he has returned is, that he thought the King's affairs in so great a disorder, that he knew not how he could serve him; he saw no way of bringing things to a settlement, but if there were any such he would be willing to

* It would seem from several expressions in these letters that the King and Lord Somers had personal altercation.

assist in it, and in that consideration would defer his journey a little longer.

He has made this answer for gaining so much time only as he may be satisfied, whether his proposal be approved of; if it be disliked, he still holds his resolution of going away. The substance of the proposal is, that the King, and my Lord Somers may be brought to rely one on the other, and that all dissatisfactions may be removed; that my Lord Somers forbear shewing any resentment for what is past, but, on the contrary, that he dispose his friends to carry on the public business next session, they being satisfied that the King will desire nothing unfit or unreasonable from them.

If there be any doubt of the King's performances, assurances may be given as your Grace shall think necessary and convenient. By this means my Lord Somers would return into the King's service with a better grace and more authority than he had before, If these measures go on, there must no alterations be made but such as will best suit therewith. He knows of no engagements the King is under to any person whatsoever in opposition to my Lord Somers; and believes if there had been any such, he should have heard of it. If this proposal be thought worth considering, he consents that my Lord Somers, Lord Orford, Lord Wharton, and Mr. Montague, should be acquainted with it, but upon express condition that it go no farther, either directly or indirectly, to

any person whatsoever, unless in the progress of it it shall be found necessary to be communicated to such as your Grace shall approve of, which he thinks you will not do without his privity and allowance.

If you think well of the matter, and give any encouragement to it, he will find out some pretence for staying in town till you are well enough to come to Hampton Court. In the meantime, he will do all he can to prepare things for your coming, and in order to it he will endeavour that the seals may be put into the hands of commissioners. If your Grace thinks any thing is to be done here, you will so order it, that my Lord Wharton and Mr. Montague shall make you a visit at Heythrop, and what you shall agree on they will communicate to my Lord Somers, and use their interest with him, that he may approve of it. If the difficulty should lie on my Lord Somers's part, and he be resolved against taking the seals again, as preferring his own quiet and not to expose himself to new attempts, the same measures may still be carried on with his concurrence (though not so satisfactorily to the public); in that case it must be considered who shall be recommended to the King as Lord Keeper; as also care to be taken, that my Lord Somers be made easy in his fortune, which he hopes will likewise be done to all that be principally concerned in this matter to their entire satisfaction.

He is very desirous to know your Grace's thoughts

of this proposal, before he goes to Hampton Court, on Tuesday morning ; since his going into the country, or his stay here, will depend upon it.

As he desires this may be kept a secret from all but those who are above named, so he does assure me he will not make the least mention to any body whatsoever, except the King and two others, when the King has communicated it to them, which he thinks is unavoidable.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 14, 1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 12th, and have communicated it to my Lord Sunderland, who entirely agrees with you that this matter is to be treated with great caution, so that no side may be exposed by any failure in it ; but whatever difficulties be in the way, he thinks they may be got over, and it is worth struggling with them to gain so good an end. As to the King's part, he knows it has been so long his opinion, that the Whigs were the only persons to be depended upon for the support of his government, that he makes no doubt but the King may be prevailed on to do any reasonable thing that will content them ; which you may be satisfied in, as soon as you can come to speak with the King. That he has made such a false step in parting with my Lord Chancel-

lor, is to be attributed to the great disturbance he was put into by that fatal bill. His Lordship is sure that if the part he took in that bill had not made the King withdraw himself from him, the King would have had no hand in removing the seals ; but as it is, he thinks the matter still retrievable, and that my Lord Somers may enter again upon business more to his satisfaction, and with a greater confidence between him and the King, than has been hitherto ; there will want only his own concurrence, which will be his friends' parts to persuade him to.

Your Grace judges very right, that this is not to be transacted by letters, or at a distance ; and if you are not like to have an opportunity of seeing my Lord Wharton and Mr. Montague while you are in the country, my Lord Sunderland is very well satisfied that the matter should rest till you come to Hampton Court, where he hopes to see you within some convenient time, and that you shall then take such measures together, as in all probability will produce the wished for effect.

He is gone this day to Hampton Court, expecting that the King will make him put off his journey into the country, and that he will talk to him about the disposal of the seals. Upon Mr. Attorney's refusing them, some one would have had them offered to my Lord Chief Justice, but there is so little chance of his meddling with them, that I believe it will not be so much as attempted. Perhaps an offer of the seals may be made to Serjeant Wright, to

prevent their taking any jealousy, who are averse to the putting of the seals into commission, which will be the last trial for a single person, but whether this take place, or that the seals go into the hands of commissioners, it will be equally consistent with the carrying on the other design, if it be approved of.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 16, 1700.

I was very sorry to hear this morning at Hampton Court, from my Lord Coningsby and Sir John Stanley, that your Grace found yourself so ill as to doubt whether you should be well enough to go into Ireland;* but I hope your remedies will not fail you, and when you are recovered, you will take what resolution you please.

I saw my Lord Sunderland yesterday; he tells me that all dissatisfactions are now over between the King and him, that the King would have him put off his journey, so he does not think of going this fortnight. He found the King was set rather upon appointing a Keeper than Commissioners for the Seal, and Mr. Serjeant Wright† is the man pitched

* He had been offered the posts of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and Groom of the Stole, to be held together.

† Nathan Wright, a Tory lawyer, of Gothurst in Buckinghamshire. This appointment, with the secret communications between the King and Lord Rochester, were the first indications of the plan William was about to pursue.

on, if he will undertake it. I have heard since, that my Lord Rochester has undertaken to get him spoke to. What answer he will make I know not ; but he has been very ill of late, and is scarce recovered yet. If he boggles at it, I take it for granted Commissioners must be appointed, such as shall be proposed by those who have the Seals now in custody. My Lord Sunderland had an opportunity to represent fully to the King, what care was to be taken that the Whigs be not alienated from him, and that a stop be put, if it be possible, to the umbrage they have already upon what is past. His Majesty seemed very desirous to retain the party, if they could be brought into any disposition to serve him, and he approved very well that no alterations should be made, that the same Parliament should meet again, and none to be removed out of their employments ; and in this management the King has promised him to observe the greatest secresy imaginable.

This he thinks a very good step to what he designs shall follow, if he can have your Grace's assistance ; but without that, I believe, he does not propose to himself any success.

What he particularly moved the King in, was that he should not leave Mr. Montague under any suspicion as if he had withdrawn his kindness from him. I hope, therefore, he will soon feel the return of it.

The Parliament being to meet on Thursday next, according to the last prorogation, it was resolved

this day at Council, that the next prorogation should be for a month, viz., to the 20th day of June, and my Lord Bridgewater is to have his commission renewed for being Speaker to the House of Lords.

Sir George Rooke sailed out of the Downs on Tuesday last,* in the afternoon. I suppose now he is upon the coast of Holland.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 18, 1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 15th and 16th. I am very sorry to hear of this ill condition of your health, which I am afraid will not mend under so great uneasiness of mind. When I first heard of these employments being heaped upon you, it was my apprehension it would give you occasion to make so many reflections upon it, that you would at last meddle with none of them. It was believed at Hampton Court that some conversations you had at Woborne might make you change your mind. What passed there I do not pretend to know, but there is enough said here to shew that your accepting new employments at this time is taken very ill by them.

These considerations, added to such an uncertainty of health, must needs weigh with one who has

* For the Baltic.

no great gust for public employments; they have made such impressions upon me, that I told my Lord Sunderland, I had little expectation of your taking either of these places. He wished it might be otherwise, but after some pause upon it, he said it was fit the King should gratify you in what manner you liked best, and if you would defer meddling with business, that it ought to be left to your choice to do what shall be most agreeable to you; but, as he is still intent upon his project, and thinks if it does not succeed one way or another, the nation may be brought to some dangerous crisis, he hopes you will give what assistance you can towards diverting such a calamity, which he thinks nobody can contribute so much to, as your Grace, whether you take an employment or not.

As the greatest difficulty is like to lie with my Lord Somers and his friends, perhaps you may have a greater influence with them, if they find by your declining the present offers, that you will have no interest distinct from theirs, nor be tempted by any advantages which they apprehend themselves excluded from. If it shall be agreeable to you, he will prepare the way with the King for your laying down the Chamberlain's office, without having any other put upon you. In that case, he believes you would choose rather to wait on the King, and make a personal resignation, which will give him an opportunity so to explain to you what he aims at, that he is confident you will approve of it, and find it prac-

licable as well as desirable ; but if, upon your considering it together, you determine against it, he seems resolved to think no more of it, or of any thing else but living in the country.

I hear Mr. Montague has been lately with the King, and that they talked of affairs pretty freely. The King began with the reports that have been spread abroad of his hard usage to my Lord Somers, and mentioned how often my Lord Somers had told him that he found he was growing a weight upon public business, which appearing every day more and more visible, the King was not unwilling to accept of his resignation ; or, to make the most of it, he met him half way in that design ; but he did not see why an occasion should be taken from thence for giving so great an alarm, as if this were the first step towards turning every body else out of their employments ; that he had no such intention, but those who shewed any zeal for his service might be assured of his favour, and as Mr. Montague had done him very acceptable services, and was still capable of doing more, he should have reason to take it amiss if he found him cold and slack in it.

Mr. Montague gave the King assurances of his readiness to serve him with the same vigour he had done, but he hoped nothing would be expected from him that was not consistent with his friendship and obligations to my Lord Somers. The King answered that was far from his thoughts ; on the contrary, he expected that my Lord Somers should join with him

in promoting what might be for his service and the public good, so as there might be no occasion for their taking any thing amiss of one another. This has been told me as a great secret, and therefore I must desire your Grace will keep it to yourself.

I hear Mr. Serjeant to-night has closed with the offer that has been made him of the Great Seal, which I suppose will be delivered to him next council day.

By what I have since learned, I believe the communication of the late treaty* has not been made to the Spanish Ambassador, without his Majesty's privy. Comte D'Aversberg forbears to say much of it, till he has orders from Vienna. He expects to be recalled. He has long talked of it, I believe, in expectation the matter would come to this issue. He thinks he shall be sent Ambassador into Spain.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 21, 1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 18th. I am afraid your remedies want their effect, by the disquiet you give yourself on account of Ireland, but you may put yourself out of that pain when you please. I read your letter of the 15th to the King on Sunday morning, and my Lord Sunderland had an audience that afternoon. The King

* The second partition treaty.

kept to his old way, and was inclined to think that the spleen was predominant at present, and said he would write to you on that subject. He told my Lord Sunderland the same thing, but then added, that if you were bent against any of these employments, he would not press you further, but you should do whatever you had a mind to. Being at this liberty, I hope you will make the full use of it: if you have a mind to be rid of all business, you have now an undeniable excuse for it. If other thoughts return to you with your health, you can never fail of being courted to what you shall like best.

I perceive your Grace thinks my Lord Sunderland's project pretty impracticable. He has another opinion of it, and still believes you and he together could put it beyond doubt; but I own yours was to be the most difficult part, being to preach patience to those who seem to have lost it, and to raise a confidence where the jealousies were run to extremity before this change. My Lord Sunderland goes on to keep things in a good disposition, if any body will come in to improve it; and what he tells me he advises the King to, is very well received.

Some press the King to declare there shall be a new Parliament this winter. My Lord Sunderland is for continuing this: the matter will rest in suspense till the King comes back from Holland, and then it will be determined according to the prospect there shall be of being assisted by one or the other party. Some press for Mr. Harcourt's

being made Solicitor-General, and I do not doubt but others are designed for other employments, but the King will admit of no changes, unless apparent necessity hereafter enforces it. It looks to me as if there was to be an auction of offices next winter, that shall go to the fairest bidders. The King would be a gainer by it, if people had a regard to his ease and service in their contest for places ; but we see nothing aimed at but putting one another down only to rise upon their ruins, and the public is a sacrifice to self-interest.

My Lord Sunderland has now resolved upon going out of town on Monday next. He has promised the King he will wait on him before he goes out of England, and he would be glad to do it when your Grace comes to resign your staff, if that be your intention ; but if you have no mind either to the journey, or to hear more of the project, you will then take your leave by letter to the King.

The Council is summoned this afternoon for delivering the Great Seal to Mr. Serjeant Wright, and accordingly, I am going to Hampton Court, where, perhaps, I may have something to write to you from the King.

As to the returning answers to the Council, I think it is sufficient if they be sent to one of the clerks. Mr. Povey is now in waiting ; if you please you may write to my Lord President, and if they are sent to me, I shall put them into Mr. Povey's hands.

I do not expect any good use will be made of Sir George Rooke's expedition,* though it should have success. I don't know what to think of it, the Danes seeming hitherto resolved on extremities. I know not what encouragement they have except that of Poland. The French carry it trimmingly, and direct every thing to their main point of the Spanish succession. In all probability they will favour that party which gives them the best assurances in that particular: perhaps that may be the reason why they were in such haste to have it known every where. The two letters enclosed are from my Lord Marlborough and Mr. Colt; the latter thinks your Grace is still at Hampton Court.

I am just come from Hampton Court, where I have seen the seals delivered to Mr. Serjeant Wright; he has had a great fit of sickness, but seems to be pretty well recovered. There was but an indifferent appearance of Councillors; perhaps my Lord Tankerville and Mr. Montague absented themselves designedly.

I read the King the melancholy part of your letter; he was concerned to hear it. He had got a letter ready for you, but said he must alter it, since what he had writ was upon a supposition that your Grace would have borne a little raillery, but finding it otherwise, he will write to you more seriously.

* To assist the King of Sweden and Duke of Holstein in repelling the aggression of the Danes and Poles.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 23, 1700.

I have the honour of your Lordship's letter of the 20th; I carried it this morning to Hampton Court, leaving out any mention of my Lord Sunderland, or the project. The King was very sorry it should be demanded of him, as a gratification, to discharge you of all the employments he designed you for, which were the best he had to give, and he was sure you would have served him well in them, and have given a general satisfaction. He said he would write to you himself, and when he gave me the letter he told me he had said all he could to put you at ease; that if you had no mind to go to Ireland it should not be put upon you, and you should be freed from any thing you thought a burden to you; that he would not have you undertake a journey now, but attend the recovery of your health, only he hoped he should see you before you went out of England; and you knew the time of his journey, that it would be soon after Midsummer. In the meantime, he would not have you send up your key, or be uneasy about that or any other employment. That which further induces me to think you will be no more pressed about Ireland is, that the King began to consider what he should do with that Government. He thought there could not be a new Commission of Justices, since that would not agree with the intention he had of putting my

Lord Galway at the head of the troops, who was not like to serve under a commission, and therefore some fit person must be thought of for Lord Lieutenant. Besides, my Lord Sunderland bids me assure your Grace that you may depend upon having the King as easy as you wish him, and you may resign every thing if you would have it so, and yet part upon as good terms with the King as if you had accepted his offers. He shall dine with the King on Saturday at my Lord Bradford's, at Twickenham, and if the King has any reserves to press you upon, he will get them laid aside.

He continues his resolutions of going to Althorp on Monday, and designs to wait on the King again about three weeks hence, if it suited with your health and conveniency to come to Hampton Court about that time.

He is confident he should entirely satisfy you as to what he designs. He is positive that Mr. Serjeant Wright's having the Seals will be no obstruction at all to it, and the rather since when the Serjeant took the Seals, he did it with a foresight that he should not hold them long, and therefore intended to move his Majesty that his compliance might not turn to his prejudice by any change; but his Majesty prevented him, and of his own accord told him that if any thing should arise which might require the Seals being removed out of his hands, he should not suffer by his accepting them.

I have had another resignation upon my hands

this day. My Lord Privy Seal having writ to me from Bath, that I should acquaint his Majesty that he was reduced to so ill a state of health as to be utterly incapable either of doing his Majesty's service, or of receiving any comfort of his life; and seeing no measure to take but to expect the event of his case at home, he desired his Majesty's leave to retire thither; and because it might be inconvenient to his Majesty's affairs to have the Seals in a hand so unable to do service, and at so remote a distance, he desired leave to submit them to his Majesty's disposal, and that they might be sent for with a warrant for the delivery of them, since it was impossible for him, in his weak condition, to come up to London.

His Majesty has consented to his going into the country, but as to the Seals, he would have him use them as he did when he went into the country last year, or that the business may be dispatched in what other way he thinks fit to propose, without his parting with the office, which I shall signify to him to-night.

My Lord Keeper is not yet removed from his lodgings at the Gravel Pits, where he has been some time for the recovery of his health, but to-morrow I hear he comes to town.

The Parliament was prorogued to-day till the 20th of June, my Lord Bridgewater having a commission to supply my Lord Keeper's place as Speaker.

The King dines with my Lord Romney on Monday next at Greenwich, and talks of going to Windsor towards the latter end of next week, and will stay till the new knights' instalments are over, which they say is to be on Monday se'nnight, and that the King will be at the charge of their entertainment.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 25, 1700.

There is little to acquaint your Grace with this post, but I can't omit mentioning what I heard yesterday from my Lord Coningsby, that the Tory party seeing no other removes made, as they expected, to make room for some of them, they begin to say they smell a design of piecing up again with the Whigs, and therefore he believes they will be in no better humour the next winter than they were the last. They suspect that Mr. Montague carries messages between the King and my Lord Somers, and some of them think that my Lord Sunderland is going into the country because he cannot influence the King to enter further into the Tory measures. I perceive that either he or they understand this matter by halves. It is certain that my Lord Coningsby would be glad to see Mr. Harcourt, and

I know not whom besides, brought into places. He is going into Herefordshire, and tells my Lord Sunderland that he will take Heythrop in his way, and make your Grace a visit. He said nothing of it to me, nor do I know why he should make it a mystery.

My Lord Sunderland has called here this evening to tell me he came from dining with the King at my Lord Bradford's, that he had a good deal of discourse with his Majesty about your Grace, and the King has assured him, that you shall be at your entire liberty whether you will take any employment or not, and if you choose to resign every thing, it shall not in the least alter his kindness towards you, only he desires he may see you before he goes for Holland; and particularly he would speak with you concerning the Whigs.

My Lord Sunderland defers his journey for one day, but is resolved to go on Tuesday. He will come up again to meet your Grace at Hampton Court whenever you design to be there.

The King has spoke to Lord Haversham, Lord Macclesfield, and Mr. Smith, to let them know that he has no other thoughts but of employing the Whigs, which seemed well satisfied. Lord Haversham told him they ought likewise to have their chief reliance on his Majesty. Mr. Smith gave assurances of his zeal and perseverance in his Majesty's service.

The King will speak in the same manner to my Lord Stamford and my Lord Lexington, when he sees them.

The King had some talk with my Lord Orford, and mentioned to him that he would not have the Whigs apprehensive of being displaced. My Lord answered that he did not know he had any Whigs remaining in his service.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 28, 1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 25th, and have this morning presented the enclosed to his Majesty : when he had read it and heard what I read to him out of your Grace's letter, still suppressing what related to the project, the King asked me once or twice whether there was no hopes of your accepting the government of Ireland. I told him I thought you were so resolved in that particular, that it could be no kindness to press you further in it. He said then that somebody else must be thought of. I believe the commission will be continued as it is, till the King's return from Holland, Mr. Methuen being of opinion that my Lord Galway may be prevailed with to stay so long, if the King would have it so, provided the disposal of the government be deferred no longer. Mr. Methuen

expected that if there were a new commission he should not be passed by, as he was the last time, when the Duke of Bolton came over.

His pretensions seem very well grounded as to his post and services there, but there are other considerations that must make it difficult for the King to gratify him. I can't, therefore, but think it the best way that my Lord Galway should stay in the commission till a Lord Lieutenant be named, and that should be done some convenient time before the Parliament meets.

The King observed in the letter, writ to me, what you mention of surmises as if you had contributed to my Lord Chancellor's removal, which he thought could never enter any body's head.

The King said you had writ to him, that if your coming up was necessary you would rather do it immediately than defer it: but that he thinks a hardship not to be put upon you.. If you can come without danger three weeks hence, or when you are well, he shall be glad to see you.

I sent your letter to my Lord Sunderland, and he came to me yesterday in the evening. He sees you have no great opinion of the practicableness of his project, and therefore you don't care to be concerned in it.

If that be the case, I ought to ask your Grace's pardon for having so often troubled you about it. I wished well to what I thought was aimed at, and should have been glad to see it succeed. I am sure

your Grace has the same good wishes towards it; but as you are the best judge whether the difficulties that lie in the way are to be overcome, or how far it is fit for you to appear in a matter so very nice and doubtful, I shall submit it to you, and give you no more disturbance upon this subject. What my Lord Sunderland told me on parting was, that if this matter could be rightly proposed to some leading men, they may find it of use to the public as well as themselves; that he could not think of trying it any other way than by your Grace, and if either you or they disliked it, he should think no more of it.

He is gone this morning for Althorp, with an intention to return hither about three weeks hence: he thinks the King will stay here these five weeks yet.

As to what your Grace asks, how my Lord Keeper is like to be satisfied if he should be removed again, I think that as difficult to answer as it is to know whether my Lord Somers would be willing to be reinstated, if the way to it were never so open.

I gave the King to-day a letter from my Lord Privy Seal in answer to one his Majesty writ to him. He submitted to the King's pleasure, and takes the seals with him into Westmoreland, and the business he is to pass will be sent thither to him. He makes no mention how he is as to health, nor when he intends to go from Bath.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 30, 1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 27th : and have read part of it to the King this morning. His Majesty is now convinced that you have quite laid aside the thoughts of coming to Hampton Court, and comprehends the reason of it to be, that you had no more mind to put yourself between the two parties than between two mill-stones ; though he says that would not have been your case. I believe, indeed, you would have had fairer quarter than any body else ; but as the parties are outrageous one against another, I see nothing else to be done, but to let them fight it out next winter ; and the strongest must dispose of every thing as they please themselves.

If they would do as they did in Ireland, when the Whigs there were set upon ruining Sir Charles Porter : they took particular days for that debate, and suffered it not to interfere with public business, which both sides joined in promoting ; to shew their dislike was personal among themselves, and did not affect the Government.

Perhaps, our parties are not so public spirited ; but if some of both sides do not shew an inclination to support the Government, it will quickly fall into

* Something is evidently omitted in this period, but I have not thought fit to supply it.

confusion. What your Grace observes of the behaviour of the Whigs, that even while they were discountenanced, the success of affairs in Parliament was in a great measure, owing to them, since it was in their power to obstruct them if they would; may of late, too, be said of the Tory party: particularly of Mr. Harley, who for these two years past, has given what turn he pleased to the taxes, and could have made things worse than they are. Whether he can make them better I know not; nor do I know what measures will be taken to engage him, or any body else. If my Lord Sunderland did not talk to me in disguise, I must conclude that he will have nothing to do with any other scheme than what he proposed; and that will be at an end now he has no hopes of your Grace's concurrence.

I heard to-day at Hampton Court, that your Grace had sent for some of your servants away, and some were still remaining there: perhaps, therefore, your Grace has some thoughts of waiting on the King, though you are resolved against meddling with the project. In that case, you may make the King a short visit, while my Lord Sunderland is absent, and knows nothing of your journey; but if you apprehend any inconvenience by it, that may be let alone, since, as I have said, your coming up is not now expected.

If the Treasury had thought of it time enough to have given notice, the King would have met them with the Cabinet Council this afternoon, to consider

what they had to offer upon the proposals that have been made them concerning farming the Excise ; it must be done, therefore, on Sunday. I hear they don't think there is any thing very advantageous in either of the proposals.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Whitehall, June 1, 1700.

The two letters enclosed are from the Duke of Bolton and the Earl of Sunderland. The last writes to me that he hopes the King will not press you beyond your inclination. I have sent him word that matter is now over, and that I expect to hear of new measures to be taken. The reasons I give him for it is, the complaint I meet with of the want of a ministry ; that a great deal of time is passed and nothing done ; that there is nobody now in employment fit to be relied on for the conduct of the commission of Lords Justices.

This looks to me as if there was a design to get some principal offices filled before the King's going over to Holland. Some ask what my Lord Sunderland is gone into the country for, and what it is he drives at. As things stand, he is likely to be suspected of both sides, and if he could bring himself to it, perhaps it would be more advisable for him to have nothing to do with either of them.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Whitehall, June 4, 1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 1st. inst., and have acquainted his Majesty with the contents of it. The King says he left you at your liberty, whether you would go to Ireland or not; but he does not know whether you have absolutely declined it. He shewed me your letter, which I thought amounted to it, since you gave him thanks for excusing you from that undertaking; but since he expects to know what your Grace's final resolutions are, as to the employments he offered you, or whether there be any thing else in his service that would be more agreeable to you, you will either write to him, or lay your commands upon me to satisfy him in these particulars.

His Majesty has been a little feverish since he was at Windsor: whether it was by riding in the sun or walking without his coat in the evening, but he came from Windsor out of order; and though he went to church on Sunday, yet he did not dine in public that day: he slept well last night, and is thought to be pretty well to-day, but he looks a little pale. I believe he may be somewhat disturbed with the accounts we have from Scotland. The Duke of Hamilton makes great use of the inclination that nation has to maintain their Darien project, and proposed on Monday se'nnight, that

they should pass an act to assert their right to make a settlement at Darien, and that they would support it as a national concern. The High Commissioners and the King's servant in that Parliament were for the Company's going on to make good their settlement as they had begun, without making a public act for it, which might create difficulties with Spain, and other Foreign Princes, and got the House to adjourn till Thursday following, that there might be time to let them understand the ill consequences of what they were driving at; but when they met again on Thursday, they were still in the same temper, and besides, being privately spoken withal upon other points, they seem to be wrong set in those two. They would assert Presbytery to be *jure divino*, and that their ecclesiastical assemblies are not to be controuled by the royal authority, which looks like the setting up the Covenant again. And, as to the keeping up the forces, their intention was to have a question pass upon every regiment: perhaps the meaning of it is, that some of them should be reduced.

The Commissioner, finding them in this ferment, has adjourned the Parliament to the 20th of this month, which they are not satisfied with, but have deputed two members out of each of the three states; viz., the nobility, shires, and boroughs, to complain of this adjournment, and to desire the Parliament may not fail to meet on that day. I hear, likewise, that my Lord Seafield is coming up, to give an

account how matters stand. It is probable his Majesty's ——* may think his presence necessary in Scotland. If they do so, I hope they will be able to assure him what effect he shall have of his coming hither. The deputies from the nobility are, my Lord Ross and the Earl Marshal; the first has been disappointed in some expectations, and is grown out of humour.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

June 6, 1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 3rd, which I attended the King with this morning.

As to your delivering up your key, since you are resolved upon it, he leaves it to you to do it when you think fit. He hopes your doing it will not be liable to be misinterpreted, as if he contributed to your laying down.

I told him your Grace was incapable of giving it any such turn, and I did not believe he had any such thoughts of you. He said he only spoke it in reference to other people, who were apt to put hard censures upon all that passed. He added, that he had another key to dispose of, which should lie vacant, since perhaps you might be reconcileable to it some other time.

* A word wanting.

His Majesty takes it very well of you that you will use your interest to keep people in a good disposition towards the public, and for quieting animosities. He says he has nothing unreasonable to demand, but shall leave it to the nation to provide for their own safety as they think fit themselves; but he should be glad to see them at peace with one another, and if that can't be obtained, he thinks it very hard that he must suffer on all sides.

I hope his Majesty is pretty well again; but methinks he looks a little pale and weak. He goes to-morrow to Windsor, and returns next day.

I have heard no more of Scotch affairs. We must now expect the coming up of my Lord Seafield and the Deputies from their Parliament.

I had a letter yesterday from my Lord Sunderland, who writes as if he little thought of coming up. He says if you had done it, it might have been to the advantage of the public. But, without doubt, you were in the right as to yourself, and so every body else would be in following your example.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

June 8, 1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 5th, and wish all success to the affair you are negotiating. Since you have so fair an opportunity of

discoursing with my Lord Wharton and Mr. Montague together, I hope you will not let it slip without knowing those gentlemen's minds in relation to the public.

I told your Grace, last post, what his Majesty's answer was upon your assuring him you would do whatever lay in your power, to prevail with those you had any interest in to serve his Majesty and the public, and to forbear animosities. Perhaps there never was a time when there was greater occasion for the giving and following such advice; and if it be not done with regard to the King, the consideration of the public safety ought to have great weight in this conjuncture.

Every body seems to be dissatisfied here. I don't know but Scotland is ready to break out into a flame; and the French, notwithstanding our new engagements with them, will not be sorry to find an opportunity of throwing us into confusion. They talk of my Lord Middleton's running to Comte Torcy almost every day, which we may be assured is not to consult our quiet.

I may add, that the King is under a load of thoughtfulness, which perhaps may have an ill influence upon his health.

All things here seem to be at a stand, and neither to step backwards nor forwards. Now they say there will be no alterations made, that the government of Ireland must continue as it is till winter.

I think my Lord Sunderland has taken a reso-

lution not to come up. He writes to his son that he and his lady are so well pleased with the country, that they do not intend to leave it upon any considerations whatsoever.

Mr. Methuen is gone this day for Ireland; he is to persuade my Lord Galway to have patience, till the King can resolve how to dispose of that commission. He thinks the King is changed towards him, and would have been willing to be discharged of his employment; but he stays till the alteration is made of the Justices' commission; and his continuance after that will depend upon what the succeeding governor shall desire.

The King was against Sir Salathiel Lovel's being made a Judge, because he would not make way for Sir Bartholomew Shower's coming to be Recorder. I don't find any body much satisfied with Serjeant Darnell's promotion; and they say he does not himself like his being placed in the Exchequer, where, he says, he has had no experience, and having been always used to the King's Bench bar, he thought another would not have been brought over him.

I lay these particulars together, and leave it to your Grace to make what use of them you think fit. If the Whig party can be disposed to unanimity, and to join in the support of the government, they may not only preserve the nation, but procure to themselves and their friends what satisfaction they can reasonably propose.

If they do not care to have any thing to do with

my Lord Sunderland, I hope they will find out a better way for carrying on their business. In the meantime, I think some right ought to be done him, and that he should not be looked upon as their greatest enemy, when I think there is not just ground for it. A man that does all he can to gain their good opinion, should not be treated for it with ill-will and contempt.

You give me leave to add, in relation to myself, that if I am in any way obnoxious, I don't care how soon I am removed; and I can't propose to myself to stay in a Court where I now lose the prospect of having any one friend remaining. Whatever becomes of me, I shall at least have the inward satisfaction that I have acted with integrity, according to the best of my weak judgment, without either courting an enemy, or deserting a friend.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

June 11, 1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 8th, and have read part of it to his Majesty this morning. The King told me he thinks of going to Holland before the end of the month; I believe, therefore, you may discharge yourself of the Lord Chamberlain's key as soon as you please; and, for aught I know, somebody may be ready to receive

it, but who, I can't tell; for I am in no part of the secret, if any be carried on for the disposal of employments.

Your Grace knows my Lord Jersey has been long talked of for your Staff; and it is said he designs to bring Mr. Hill into the Secretary's office, which seems probable enough, if my Lord Rochester is the person to be depended on for the chief conduct of affairs.

Mr. Hill is one I had always a kindness and esteem for, but I know not whether I should wish him my colleague. I always hoped the King would take one of his secretaries, at least, out of the House of Lords; I thought his service, as well as the dignity of the office, might require it. In that case, I should be better pleased to continue where I am; the business of the Northern Province would grow every day more and more easy to me; and for having anything to do with France, I have always dreaded it; and on many accounts, I am very unfit for it.

If my Lord Sunderland continued in the management, he would have considered my reasons more than I expect others will, which gives me but a mortifying prospect as to my own concerns; but I can say nothing positively of these matters, that came to me hitherto only by report from others.

I believe your Grace may desire to be satisfied whether Scotland is quiet enough to allow the King's going for Holland. That I much doubt of;

but his heart seems fixed upon the journey. I believe it may be of consequence to his health, one way or another, whether he goes or stays. In all appearance, the King is now well again: they tell me he eat a better meal last night than he has done for some time before, and slept well after it. But there runs a whisper, that Dr. Radcliffe observing him during his late indisposition, came out with it to some of his confidants, that he thought the King could not live three months to an end. He has been mistaken in many of his conjectures, and it is of infinite consequence that he should be in this.

I believe a journey to Loo would entirely expel this distemper, but what condition we shall be in, I know not. The Scotch look as they were ready for any mischief, and that nothing will please them, but setting up for themselves: this is the general discourse, but I have not yet spoke with my Lord Seafield to know it more certainly. He and the Earls of Argyle and Anandale waited on the King on Sunday, and have been much at Hampton Court since. This morning the Parliament deputies came thither and presented their address, but mistook in the manner of doing it. It was their intention to have read it to the King; but as soon as they had kissed his Majesty's hand they presented it; and the King not opening the paper, one of them made a motion as if he would have had it again to read it, but the King kept it fast, and said he would read and consider it, and so passed on to

the Treasury, leaving the deputies to look upon one another as persons that found themselves in an error; though, perhaps, that may be improved in Scotland as a farther mark of his Majesty's neglect of them.

The King thinks he can't consent to their passing such an act as they propose about the settlement of Darien. The Commissioner had offered them that he would pass an act for their raising a general tax to reimburse the undertakers of that expedition, which was a ——* to enable them to carry it on; but they push for extremities, and besides the support of Darien, they aim at the removing the present ministry in Scotland, and that they may have no forces kept up in time of peace, which I hear are points touched at in their address.

As to the last, I believe they must be in some measure gratified by breaking at least some regiments, for they talk of a lieutenant-colonel or two that have promoted the signing these addresses, particularly one that belongs to my Lord Teviot's regiment.

Upon the whole, there is no likelihood that Parliament can meet at the time they are adjourned to; and we must expect to see how they will resent it.

* The word "fair" is here written apparently by mistake.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

January 13, 1700.

I met with Mr. Montague this morning at Hampton Court, who told me how he left your Grace, and how matters stood in relation to my Lord Carbery. Whether you had any discourse with him about public affairs, I don't expect to hear but from yourself.

The King has bid me write to my Lord Sunderland, to desire that he will come up next week, his Majesty having several things he would talk to him about. He mentioned his being pressed to make Mr. Comers a Judge; and there being another Judge's place vacant by the death or demitting of Baron Lechmore, that Mr. Solicitor should be brought upon the bench to make room for Mr. Harcourt to succeed him.

The King shewed no inclination to make these steps, and said my Lord Sunderland was very much against running from one extreme to another. The King would have him come up now, and if he will be persuaded to it, that he should stay in the country next winter. I fancy, therefore, if my Lord Sunderland would pursue his service, that this may be a very proper time for it, but whether he will proceed without knowing whom he may gratify, I can't tell.

Sir Michael Wharton said he would not disoblige

two Kings at a time, and others may be as cautious how they incur the displeasure of both parties. The King talks of going for Holland the first week in July. I believe it may be necessary for confirming his health, and I wish it would suit as well with our home affairs. But I know not what we are to expect from Scotland; their demands as to Darien are so extravagant, that there is no possibility of complying with them.

I understand there will be another short adjournment, in which time all endeavours will be used for bringing them to a better temper, except that of the King's going to Edinburgh, which my Lord Seafield has proposed as his own and the other Scotch Minister's advice, and yet they can't undertake that it shall make the Session end well. I don't, therefore, see how any body else can be of opinion that the King should run the hazard of a personal baffle.

It was resolved this day at Council, that the next prorogation of Parliament should be for six weeks, viz., to the 1st of August.

I suppose your Grace has now thought of sending up your key, and his Majesty seems to have designed the disposing of it, but he has not let drop any thing of the person, and all I understand by my Lord Jersey is, that he is very weary of being Secretary.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

June 15, 1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 12th, and hope you got well through your long journey. I don't know what my Lord Sunderland will do upon my summons for his coming to town, but by what he writ to me yesterday of the 13th inst., I perceive he had no thoughts then of leaving the country. His expressions are, that he had resolved a great while against coming to town; of late he had met with many things to confirm those thoughts, and nothing to change them: that a man out of employment, without a party, of no credit, pretending to nothing, and of his age, must be mad if he would begin the world anew. He hopes the King and Government will be safe, by leaving all things to the Parliament. If my Lord Sunderland comes up, it is certain that whatever is done, or left undone, will be attributed to him. What is disliked he shall hear of over and over; and if any thing hits right to some people's wishes, they will like the counsel, but hate the counsellor. I shall not, therefore, condemn him, if he keeps to his resolution.

My Lord Portland is come to town, and talks of going for Holland on Tuesday next. He is very inquisitive how the Parliament is like to relish the

treaty about the Spanish succession. If he finds it will be inveighed against, he will keep on the other side of the water.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Whitehall, June 18, 1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 15th, and this day have read part of it to his Majesty, who wishes much the Whigs may be in temper, and takes it very kindly of your Grace, that you are endeavouring to dispose them. I hope his Majesty will likewise take some pains in it; for soon after I left the King, my Lord Jersey came to me, and desired I would send Mr. Charlton to him, who, it seems, is to be employed to my Lord Hartington, with some obliging offer from the King.

This, I perceive, has arisen from my Lord Sunderland, who told me when he was in town, that he would move the King to take my Lord Hartington into the Bedchamber, and that it should be proposed to him by Mr. Charlton.

I am extremely obliged to your Grace for the trouble you gave yourself to be informed at Winchendon how matters stood as to my particular. I am very well satisfied that nothing more is objected against me than being attached to my Lord Sunderland. All that ever I have had to do with him has

been of late, and I think no part of it has been concealed from your Grace. I know you will not think there has been any crime in it hitherto. If my Lord has acted with sincerity, it is a pity he should not be heard; when the contrary appears, I shall not run on in an error, or a trick. If gentlemen have that opinion of him, as not to receive a service from him, though he mean it never so fairly, it is time for him to desert. I think that is his fixed resolution; for I had a letter from him yesterday in answer to what I writ to him by the King's command. He still seems resolved against coming up, and repeats the same reasons for it that I have mentioned already; only he adds, in express terms, that he has no credit with the King, that the greatest part of the Court is against him, though he has no more power than the least man there, and whatever was disliked he should be made the author of it; that a number behind the curtain would always be a prejudice to the King, and it was so odious and insupportable a figure, that he hoped he should take care never to be suspected of making it. That he could have been glad to have met your Grace at Hampton Court, because he thought he could then have been of some use, but now he was sure he could be of none.

All this has been read to his Majesty, but yet he will not take it for an answer, and has writ himself to my Lord Sunderland, to press his coming up, which I have dispatched to him by express, and

expect his answer by Thursday. If he can't any longer withstand coming up, I think after these declarations, the Whigs ought to have no jealousy of his journey. But it is most probable, it will end in putting him upon as bad terms with the Tories as he is now with the Whigs, which is making one's court at a very dear rate. He says himself that a hundred difficulties occur to him, which he is neither of a humour nor an age to struggle with. All I shall say now is, that as far as I know him, I pity him. He has abilities that might be of great use to the public. If he has other qualities to make him dreaded, it is what I know nothing of, but if he suffers only under mistaken jealousies, he has a hard fate.

When I read to his Majesty out of your letter, that your key would be here on Friday, I mentioned the town talk, that it was to be given to my Lord Jersey, which his Majesty not disowning nor confirming, I desired the key might not be disposed of till he had resolved into whose hands he would put the Seals, since the Chamberlain's place might better lie vacant than the Secretary's. His Majesty said there could be no inconvenience, if it were done as soon as he returned. Perhaps this has been making my court very ill to a favourite, but I spoke of it before as freely to his Lordship; and told him, moreover, that if he quitted the Seals, I hoped the King would give them to some person of quality, for preserving the office from contempt;

and if there were occasion, it should be my request to his Majesty. He made me a pretty odd answer; that though I were Secretary of State, I would not pretend to make another. Neither do I; but it may be as free for me as any body to give my opinion what qualifications are necessary for such an employment.

He said it had been frequent to have two commoners, and how if Mr. Harley should be the man? I told him that I thought he was not so ready for it. My Lord mistook me in one thing, as if I had said, he had shewed some impatience for having the key.

Mr. Hill spoke to me of it to-day, as a thing that had given his Lordship great trouble, that I could imagine he wished the key out of your hands, for whom he had so real a respect. I satisfied him that I had used no such expression, nor was it in my thoughts, for I knew of no impatience but your Grace to be discharged of the key as soon as the King would please to give way to it.

The chief end I have in mentioning these passages is, to shew that I was in the right to foresee and bemoan my destitute and unbefriended condition. Is it not like to one that is got to a great height, his ladder being taken away, and his prop gone, so that he neither knows how to stay there, or how to get well down? And yet all this does but make me resolve to go on my own way, to steer by my

own compass, and to trust Providence with the event.

On Sunday last, the King bid me write to the Admiralty, that a convoy and the yachts should be ready to attend him by the 4th of next month.

My Lord Seafield seems concerned that he will think of going away while their affairs are in such a crisis ; but he don't yet know whether they will mend or grow worse. There are letters that mention as if some were relenting, and think they ought to be contented with what was offered ; but he can't tell whether it may not be an artifice to draw on a session, whereby to have an opportunity to redouble their onset. But he expects greater certainty by the Lord Commissioner's letters that are not yet arrived. By what I have heard of the proposal at Winchendon, I wish you had had a better offer made you.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

June 22, 1700.*

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 17th and 18th instant, and last night Mr. Smith

* N. B. This letter affords an extraordinary and minute picture of the feelings and views of the party which succeeded to power, and throws open at once the very bosom of transactions which have hitherto been only divined from their results.

brought me your key, which I shall deliver to his Majesty to-morrow, he having been at Windsor since yesterday.

I did not write to your Grace by last post, since you were like to be from home till next week. I was that day at Hampton Court, and read your letter of the 17th to his Majesty, whose answer was, that he could not say he was well pleased with your renouncing all employments; and particularly, if you would have gone to Ireland, it would have been of great use to his service; and at Dublin, you would be freed from the disquiet people that the ministry are exposed to here. But, he said, he was fully satisfied of your good intentions; that, as he was always disposed to be kind to you, so, he knew, you would not be guilty of ingratitude.

He believed you would do all you could to keep your friends in temper, but he questioned whether you would be able to prevail with them. He remembered you always preferred moderate ways, and endeavoured to bring others to it; but he could give me instances when people's obstinacy were too hard for your advices, and he could not persuade himself you would have more power out of employment than in it. He rather feared you would give yourself up to the ease of a country life, and be unconcerned at what others are doing.

I have hardly omitted any thing of what his Majesty said on this occasion, by which you will see his Majesty's wishes. He could have retained you in

his service, but if you can make him amends, by taking your own way, he will forget all disappointments, and be pleased you should follow your own methods.

I told his Majesty, at the same time, of a conversation I had with Mr. Harley the day before, whom I met accidentally, and had a pretty free discourse with him upon several heads. Finding him still exasperated against my Lord Somers, I told him what I thought would be the consequence of falling again upon his Lordship next winter; that they certainly would find themselves disappointed, for all the compassion would be on his side, besides doing right to his merit; and it would turn out to the drawing an odium upon my Lord Sunderland, whom I knew he wished better to, than to have his name called into question next session. He asked, what they could say to my Lord Sunderland? I told him, if they had nothing to say to him, they would make more of that nothing, than all that could be raked up against my Lord Somers would amount to.

We talked, likewise, about Mr. Harcourt, whom they would make Solicitor, by removing Sir John Hawles to be a judge. I desired him to consider what they would gain by such a step; that I always understood it was his opinion the Whigs should not be made desperate; and I asked him if any one act could go farther towards it, than by giving the first preferment to Mr. Harcourt; and that not in a very

natural way, since the Solicitor had no inclination to be removed : that I supposed all who took preferments upon them, did it with an intention to be more serviceable to the King than those were they displaced ; and he knew very well how much every man abated in his credit as soon as he got into an office.

Whatever design men had upon places, I thought it would be a piece of prudence to let another winter pass, in which they might give the King and the nation some proof that they were disposed to serve the one, and secure the other ; and then I should wish, and perhaps many others, that they might have all they desire ; and if Mr. Harcourt would accept of any other gratifications in the meantime, I should think it well bestowed. I thought we parted pretty well edified with one another. I told the King the substance of our discourse, who seemed very desirous that people would have patience, till they could make it appear what they are able to perform. But I have lost those hopes again, for yesterday, Mr. Harley, made me a visit to let me know, that he would not be misunderstood as to any thing that had passed between us, for his part he did not know whether any body would meddle with employments or not ; that if the House of Commons were to be made a cock-pit next session, and people were to fight it out, he thought the King would be the only sufferer by it : that he had now a better opportunity to make himself easy than had

offered itself these ten years ; if it were let slip, he did not know that it was ever to be recovered.

He thought the King had but a very little time to resolve in, since people would likewise determine for themselves, and look no more towards the Court, if they saw they were undervalued. The King ought long since to have been convinced, that the persons he employs are not capable of carrying on his service ; that I knew not what assistance had been given by other people, who might hereafter be disabled from doing the same thing. He spoke of the pains he had taken to keep Mr. Harcourt from falling in with the Duke of Leeds, but he had not spoken with him of late, and knew nothing of his mind, as to the taking an employment : he rather believed he would refuse whatever could be offered him. He said the King's business must miscarry while blasted men had the conduct of it, whose avarice and oppressions would never be borne. If the King's business were in other hands, it could not but go on smoothly ; that there was such a weight in a Court, that if things were not grossly mismanaged, they would never lose a question ; and it required but little skill to foresee what would pass in a House of Commons, and what would not, so that those must be unpardonable who run a government upon rocks and shallows : the nation will rid themselves of such pilots one way or another. It was now a general complaint we had no ministry, no right management of public affairs ; and if the King

did not mind it, a reformation would be wrought in a more disagreeable manner. I could only say to all this, that I foresaw we were never to have any quiet, if the pulling one another down was the only way to settlement.

It is very probable, that what has been said to me has been more enlarged upon at Hampton Court; and whether it prevail or not, I am in a fair way to be looked upon as the obstruction of fine schemes; but let that take its chance, when my neighbours are stripped of their employments, I am not so weak as to think of keeping mine. Mr. Harley professes himself to be of no party, and yet finds fault with the new reform of the Commissions of Peace, as if it were done by halves. What this third invisible power should be, I can't imagine.

My Lord Sunderland sent up an answer to the King's letter on Thursday, which I delivered to his Majesty as he was at Council. He keeps to his resolution of not stirring from Althorpe, and declares by the grace of God, that he will meddle no more; he says the King has nothing to do but to refer every thing to his Council, and to act above board, by the advice of those, who are by their employments entitled to give it; and if he has those about him, who are not fit for those trusts, it is his fault that they are not better chosen. This behaviour of his ought to give some gentlemen a better opinion of him, if any thing can alter them. I don't yet know what is like to become of your key; but when

I spoke last to my Lord Jersey, he seemed to come over to my opinion, that the Seals ought not to lie vacant.

Last week we had a report that the Scotch had obtained a great victory over the Spaniards, at Darien ; but we have a very different account since.

I have a letter this day from Sir William Beeston, of the 20th of April, which says that a sloop was just then arrived from Santa Martha, with an advice that the governor of Carthegena, who was before Darien had writ to the Governor of Santa Martha, that he had agreed with the Scotch to desert Darien allowing their ships to go away unarmed, but with provisions enough to carry them to Scotland. This I hear is confirmed, by a ship that is arrived from New York in five weeks, who reports that the Scots have wholly left Darien, and have likewise agreed with the Spaniards, that what other of their ships may arrive there within nine months, they shall be at liberty to return.

If this news hold true, I hope that nation will no longer pursue this wild design. I saw my Lord Seafield, to-day, but he has not yet heard from the Lord Commissioner, so he does not know whether they are coming to any better temper.

They talk as if the King would be going away on Tuesday se'nnight.

The new Commission of Excise is settled. The four Members of Parliament that laid down, are—Sir William Ashurst, Mr. Clark, Car, and Kit

Montague. Everett is left out of the Commission, so the five new ones are, Mr. Parry, Strong, Phil. Riley, Townsend, who was Secretary to the last Commission, and Mr. Richard Cox, a Gloucestershire man, who was formerly concerned in Dashwood's farm. The four that remain in the Commission, are—Foot Onslow, Fleming, Meadows, and Smith, of Beaufort Buildings; the three first quit their membership in Parliament.

I don't see what notice is to be taken of Smith's applying himself to Mr. Montague; he has writ a letter or two to me, and would have come to me to make a composition, as he called it, to keep his other books from coming out in public. I sent him word that I did not understand his meaning. I suppose those who maintained him hitherto grow weary of the charge. Dr. Chamberlain has been offering his advice underhand, that the fellow should have something given him; but after the censure the Lords have twice passed upon him, and considering what rogues he is associated with, I don't see how one can meddle with him in any kind.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

June 25, 1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 22nd, and did not imagine you could have returned from Wales so soon.

I delivered your key to his Majesty on Sunday morning : he said he heard that my Lord Wharton made a triumph that they had prevailed with you to quit every thing. I told him, more of those reports would run about than were fit to be heeded, that you would never differ in the account you had given of the reason for your resigning. He said he made no doubt of your integrity and affections. He was satisfied you would do all you could for his service and quiet ; but he still doubted how far you could influence others to be of your opinion.

The next day the key was given to my Lord Jersey. I did not hear of it till Mr. Yard shewed it me in Mr. Prior's letter, who writ for the Seals to be carried to Hampton Court.

On Sunday, my Lord Romney was declared Groom of the Stole ; and my Lord Carlisle came thither that day, and kissed the King's hand for the place of Gentleman of the Bedchamber. They say my Lord Anglesey expected it. I know not what success Mr. Charlton had with my Lord Hartington, not having seen him since Thursday, when he told me that my Lord Jersey had desired him to sound my Lord Hartington, whether he would accept of an employment ; and if he found him inclinable, the King would speak to him farther about it. Mr. Charlton said he thought he should make nothing of it. There was a time when he knew my Lord Hartington would have been glad of an appointment ; but he has heard him say since, that he was better

pleased he had it not. He believed him so much a friend of my Lord Somers, that he would not now be obliged. I suppose he has carried back a cold answer, and that secrecy has been desired, which is hitherto well kept, for I find no mention made of it one way or another.

I waited on his Majesty this morning, who told me he would take time till his return from Holland, to consider of another Secretary. I thought the deferring it so long might be indifferent, since if there were twenty Secretaries during his absence, they would be but so many ciphers; but I begged it might be done as soon as he came back, or otherwise, his service must suffer extremely.

He asked me whom I would have for my colleague? I said I should never presume to recommend any body, but I hoped his Majesty would choose the fittest he could find among the persons of estate and quality; and so enlarged a little upon that topic, which I thought was well enough received. If any such occur to your Grace, I will propose him in a proper time, if you think fit.

At present, I believe Mr. Hill is deep in some people's thoughts, who know not what they are doing. If they are engrossing the ministry, I don't believe they will hearken to my advice, and they will excuse me if I do not run into their measures. I'll keep to your Grace's rule of acting uprightly, according to the best of my understanding; he only is at liberty

to do so, who does not think of supporting himself by courtship.

I find I am taken notice of already for my visit from Mr. Harley. My Lord Macclesfield told me of it to-day. God knows what one should choose in this day, one must be wholly useless, or suffer oneself to be undone with jealousies. I think one must bear the latter, and try if one can put it out of countenance.

I saw Mr. Harley again, yesterday, and he seemed better satisfied than at our last conference; what reason he has for it, I know not.

I met with Sir John Stanley, to-day at Hampton Court; he told me my Lord Jersey asked him some questions about the office, but said nothing to him about his Secretaryship. If it be thought necessary he will do as my Lord Chamberlain shall direct; otherwise, he seems well enough contented to apply himself to the Mint.

He told me that Sir Thomas Millington, Dr. Radcliffe, and Dr. Lawrence, were yesterday at a consultation concerning the King's health, in presence of my Lord Albermarle, and Lord Jersey; but the two first agreed in nothing, neither as to the distemper, nor the remedies. Dr. Radcliffe thinks the swelling in the King's leg is little less than a dropsy, and he advises purging and asses' milk. Sir Thomas Millington thinks them both contrary to the King's constitution, and he was for the King's

taking garlic, as it might be prepared and qualified. Radcliffe says, that will destroy lungs so weak as the King's ; and Millington thinks the King's lungs the soundest part about him. The first says the King will be worse for going to sea ; and the other says he will be better for going to Loo : both those opinions may be well enough consistent. But Millington, happening to say that Dr. Hatton ought to be called to the consultation, he being the King's first physician, and long acquainted with his constitution, Radcliffe, as if he were frightened at the name, flung out of the room in a passion, and so they broke up resolving on nothing.

My Lord Romney goes with the King. My Lord Chamberlain stays, to be one of the Justices ; they will be the same number as last year : and the same persons, only my Lord Keeper instead of my Lord Chancellor, and Lord Tankerville in the place of Mr. Montague.

I think the cloud that has been hanging over my Lord Marlborough is clearing up.

If any more alterations are to be made before the King's going over, I know them not.

The Irish Commission is to stand as it does, till the King comes back, and my Lord Galway submits to it.

I believe my Lord Godolphin has been invited into the Treasury, but I have heard he would never think of meddling with it unless my Lord Tankerville were otherwise considered to his satisfaction.

If that be the case, perhaps the Privy Seal might make such an accommodation.

My Lord Lonsdale, they say, is a little better, but it is much doubted whether he can recover.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

June 27, 1700.

The King has this day, at Council, named the Lords Justices, viz., the Archbishop, Lord Keeper, Lord President, Lord Privy Seal, Lord Steward, Lord Chamberlain, Earl of Bridgewater, Earl of Marlborough, and Lord Tankerville.

There was an expectation that some other would have been put in the commission, but now they conclude no more alterations are to be made. I find this raises a great jealousy on one side; I don't know whether it will help to allay it elsewhere.

I am apt to believe that the King will be pressed, at his return, to make the changes that were now expected. I wish, therefore, that against that time it might be known, whether he has any thing else to depend on. I think it is not to be doubted but he would choose what is best, if that could any way be made appear. If some gentlemen are further disappointed, I take it for granted they will shew all the resentment they are capable of, not only against

those they suppose to be the authors of it, but perhaps it may be carried even to the King, who seldom fails to be the greatest sufferer by these animosities, and if he has not a prospect how these blows may be warded off, his case will be very hard.

His Majesty acquainted the Council to-day with the great tumult and riot that has been lately at Edinburgh, upon the news they received of their victory at Darien. They had bonfires and illuminations, and in those houses that wanted the latter, the rabble broke all their windows, particularly at my Lord Argyle's, Lord Anandale's, and Lord Seafield's houses. They likewise endeavoured to break open the prisons where some had been committed for printing and publishing scandalous libels. The prison doors being too strong for them, they went to the Lord Advocate's, and forced him to sign a discharge for those men, upon which they were delivered to them. The city guards being raised to suppress them, they did it so faintly that they were routed by them, two or three being killed, as many wounded. But they afterwards dispersed, either upon the regular forces getting together, or that they began to come to themselves. His Majesty mentioned it as a matter fit to be taken notice of, but nothing was ordered or said more upon it.

The King does not intend to have a Cabinet Council summoned on Sunday, but the Lords Justices only are to attend him on Wednesday, the day before he begins his journey. The King looked

very well to-day, and was cheerful; he took a pill last night that the doctors gave him. Sir Thomas Millington does not think the swelling in the King's leg proceeds from any dropsical humour. Mr. Lock was sent for to-day and spoke with the King. I hear he agrees with Sir Thomas Millington, that if the King had a dropsy he would not have so fresh a colour. However, Dr. Lawrence intends to carry over with him a preparation of garlic. I suppose Mr. Yard will be employed as Secretary to the Lords Justices. I intend to keep where I am, in expectation of the new Secretary's being named. If he be one of the nobility, I'll make him the same compliment I did to my Lord Jersey, and hope your Grace will approve it as well.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Whitehall, June 29, 1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 26th. I can never think it a trouble to let you know how things appear to me here, nor can my time be better employed; since, perhaps, I may lay some things before you, which you well know how to make better use of than I can. I look upon our affairs to be in such a situation, as will require the help of the best and wisest heads to keep them from running into confusion.

I perceive the parties grow so heated one against another, that nothing will satisfy but the destruction of an adversary, and reconcilers begin to be looked upon as the worst of men. It is very probable I shall fall under that character. I pretend to very little interest; however I don't disown my principle, and if there are but few at court of my mind, they will discard me when they think fit.

I made Mr. Guy a visit to-day, who told me I abounded in charity, and owned, for his part, he could not be so ready to forget where he had been ill-used. I told him, I never considered what thoughts any man had of me, but of what use he might be to the public, and I wished him well accordingly.

I told him my opinion of Parliament accusations, that if they began with one man, they would not end with another. He thinks there is a strength to carry every thing one way, and says there would have been no thoughts of prosecuting things any further against my Lord Somers, if his friends had not begun with their threats against my Lord Sunderland, who, he says, was expected to come up at the King's return; but I believe he is under a mistake in that particular.

I gave my Lord Somers a private notice yesterday of a matter, that if it be not levelled against him, may in the consequence affect him.

We have issued several commissions to the ships of both the East India Companies for the seizing of pirates, which have passed under the Great Seal.

My Lord Jersey lately sent one of these commissions to my Lord Keeper, with a warrant to affix the Great Seal to it; but he boggles at it, and takes it to be illegal.

He has spoke to the Attorney General about it, who is inclined to be of the same opinion, and both of them declared it so to the King last Thursday, at Hampton Court, while I was by. But when I asked Mr. Attorney whether he had spoken with the Companies to know their reasons for demanding those commissions, he said he had not, nor had he much inquired into the matter.

I told him afterwards that I hoped he would be well satisfied in the point before he delivered such an opinion; for, since all these commissions had passed in my Lord Chancellor's time, I did not know but that if he declared them illegal, great use would be made of it to his Lordship's prejudice. He comprehended it very readily, and said it was a matter of moment, that ought to be considered all ways.

From him I went to my Lord Chief Justice, and stating the case to him, he did not see any illegality in these commissions; and since every body might and ought to seize a pirate without a commission, he knew no reason why the granting such a commission should be questioned, especially when it was at the desire of the Company who petitioned for it, and represented that it was necessary for making good their agreement with the Great Mogul's sub-

jects, whose ships they were to convoy between Mocha and Surat.

I gave my Lord Chancellor notice hereof by Sir Thomas Felton; he believes this may be intended to reach him, but is satisfied my Lord Chief Justice makes a right judgment of it.

I have lately received some packets from my Lord Bellamont, one of which was for my Lord Somers. My Lord Bellamont had desired my Lord Somers to shew me his letter, and therefore he sent it me yesterday, with a letter of his own. I immediately returned an answer to it, and took an occasion to excuse my not having waited on his Lordship, by reason of the suspicion I found myself under, which I was confident I should remove by an irreproachable behaviour. How my excuse is received I know not, but it is not a feigned one.

Mr. Lock has resigned his place at the Council of Trade. I can't tell whether there be any thing more than old age and want of health that has induced him to it, but I hear Mr. Prior is like to succeed him.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Whitehall, July 2, 1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 29th. I have not yet seen the gentleman who is to bring me a letter about a license. When I know the case, I will do what I can in it.

I shall say nothing of my Lord Windsor's sally; I have met him so often of late, that he must have been but a short time absent.

I know not whether my Lord Wharton gave any occasion for what the King has heard, but there are those who would improve a little matter of that kind.

I read to his Majesty your letter of the 26th, not only for the acknowledgments you make the King, for the justice he does you in his good opinion, but likewise for the observations you make on the behaviour of the different parties, the remembrance whereof may be of use to be repeated from time to time. His Majesty said he could hardly believe you were so attached to a party; but, he believes, if you two had kept together, you should have been better able to have managed both parties.

I have had another visit from Mr. Harley, and returned it. He does not confide enough in me, to tell me what he aims at, but I find his thoughts are bent upon having the superiority next session, whether it be a new Parliament, or the same again.

He says he will use it with moderation, and not begin accusations if they are not attacked.

I was at Hampton Court this morning, and the King seeming a little heavy, I asked him if he were out of order. He said he should be very well, if they would leave off giving him remedies. He had taken something that had put his stomach out of order. I wished him at Loo, that he might be a little eased of the cares and chagrins he met with here. To that he answered, that he should grow like the Duke of Shrewsbury, and never be at quiet for thinking of what may be troublesome and vexatious hereafter.

My Lord Rochester had an audience to-day of above an hour; he has had them pretty frequently of late.

The King holds his resolution of going on Thursday.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

July 4, 1700.

I wish the King had stayed a day longer, that I might have read him your Grace's letter of the 1st instant, and I think the King would have concurred in your sentiments of moderation, and be inclinable to recommend it to others. But God knows whe-

ther it is a doctrine that will be received, unless miracles could be wrought to enforce it ; and yet I don't see how we shall subsist without it. If the wisest and honestest of both sides do not promote it, we shall have nothing but strife, and a perpetual putting the Government backward and forward, and in such contentions, it is to be feared, the worst of men will be the only gainers.

The King thinks the Tories will not begin to be the accusers in Parliament, and that it may be avoided if provocations are not given. I desire the trial of it may appear, by their ridding their hands of Kidd, and order his prosecution without descanting upon my Lord Bellamont's letter. If they can resolve to be of this temper, is there any hopes of a cessation on the other side ? If things are brought to that pass, that there is no governing without espousing one party to the abusing of the other, we shall never be free from acts of injustice and oppression, (which, in my judgment, are as bad to commit as to suffer,) and the best men are insensibly made the tools of the greedy knaves, and the violent oppressors ; and one's understanding and integrity must be sacrificed, rather than run the risk of being suspected by one's party. I am afraid there are Colts and Arnolds of all sides, besides the injustices, impartialities, and corruptions, that others are tainted with. For my part, I think it a miserable condition not to be at liberty to own one's dislike of what one finds amiss, let who

will patronize it. If ever a balance can be held between two parties, I should think this a proper time for it; when the Whigs, having the merits of their former services, ought not to be neglected, and the Tories have gathered such a strength as to shew they are not to be despised or trampled under foot. They may have reason to be in awe of one another, for whoever gets into the saddle, and would engross it, runs a risk of being pulled out again. Under these circumstances, methinks, people should be contented to see preferments promiscuously distributed to such as shall deserve them best, whatever party they are of. I am satisfied this is right in the theory, but God knows, whether it will be reducible to practice! I know I can contribute but little towards it; however, I shall be always ready to own that I wish it.

The King went away at six this morning, from Hampton Court; he lies to-night at Canterbury, and will embark to-morrow. There was a consultation of his physicians last night; and, as I hear, they prescribe a glyster. I hope the King will be better when he is out of their hands, and at Loo.

* * * * *

My Lord Somers was at Hampton Court yesterday, to kiss the King's hand, and wish him a good voyage. He came a little before dinner, and went into the bed-chamber while the King and Princess

were there, who dined together. He staid till the King rose from table, and kissed his hand with some others. The King asked him a few questions, whether he came from London, and the like. I made my bows to his Lordship, as others did, but exchanged no words with him. He dined that day with the Duke of Somerset, at Sion House: there dined likewise the company that came into the apartments with him, viz., Lord Tankerville, Lord Hartington, and Mr. Montague.

As for the opinion about the commissions, I have the King's directions to demand it, either of the Judges or the Attorney, as I think best, in which I will be determined by my Lord Somers.

Sir Thomas Felton tells me, he thinks it very strange, that neither my Lord Keeper nor Mr. Attorney should take any notice of it to him.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

July 9, 1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 6th. I am very sorry you are pained in so many places at once; perhaps it would be better to contract them all into one, and make a formed gout, which they say may be done with a good dose of strong wines.

My Lord Spencer writes to me from Althorpe, that my Lord Sunderland has been very ill of a fit of the cholick, but he began to find ease. He is resolved that no persuasions shall bring him to town when the King comes back. If this be not the way to free him from trouble next winter, it is impossible to do it.

I believe he has been long aware of a scheme he will not truckle under, and it satisfied me he was very sincere in offering his service to gentlemen that will not accept it. He will shew he has a mind to suffer with them, though they will not let him reign with them.

When I hinted to your Grace that it was expected you should return an answer to the letter from the Council, I did it because my Lord President had then taken some little notice of it; but they proceeded however, and the lists of Justices are already despatched, and, I believe, sent to the Crown Office, that the commissions may be engrossed.

If you write at all, you need only send a list of deputy-lieutenants, if you would have any added; or otherwise, the returns of some lords-lieutenant have been, that there needs no alterations; if there are any in that county that have been put out on account of the association, it may be mentioned as others have done, that they are men of estates and quality. If you will mention the Justices, you may refer yourself to the accounts given by the Custos. If there be any noise made next session about the

Commissions of the Peace, one of the clamours will be that lords-lieutenant have any thing to do with it. It will not be a very reasonable cavil, and those that make it, will do it out of pique to one or two of the whole number.

I should be glad to do Mr. Bernard any service, I think he has suffered enough for that offence. As to any place in this office, he knows it is full. I suppose he would have me give him a good word to the next Secretary ; I will not give him a bad one if I am asked, but otherwise, it may not be very proper to be officious in recommending him. I know nobody that is more bound to good behaviour than myself, and whose forfeiture will sooner be taken, as I now stand alone.

I am to be at an entertainment to-morrow which I may expect to hear of again. Mr. Guy has sent me a letter of invitation to dine with him at Earl's Court, and tells me my Lord Keeper, Mr. Harley, and Mr. Boyle are to be of the company ; whether there be any more I don't know.

I have lately seen my Lord Rochester, who spoke of your Grace with a good deal of respect and kindness ; he regretted your not coming into employment. I endeavoured to satisfy him that your declining it was not out of any disregard to the King's service, or the public. We talked about moderation, and he wishes all parties may be disposed to it.

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MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

July 11, 1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 8th, and would not defer answering it, though I suppose you will not receive it till next week, at your return from Herefordshire. I believe when Mr. Montague sets himself to consider what is most for his interest and quiet, he will not be for keeping up Parliament contentions, the weight of which has lain and will lay more heavily on him than any man, since he is looked upon as the great champion, and therefore all thrusts are made at him. And though he has a place that can't be well taken away; yet it is liable to be curtailed by lessening the fees, which, when it shall be urged, will carry a great shew of reason with it, and regard to the subject.

Sir Thomas Clarges did it once before, since the revolution, having a mind to mortify Sir Robert Howard. I think it the interest likewise of those who have any grants, to keep down provocation as much as may be, for if debates are carried on about resuming English grants, they will, sooner or later, follow the Irish ones. It has been a maxim that to keep up a mettle in the House, it is necessary, from time to time, to set some accusations on foot, but I have seen likewise that the overdoing it has come back again upon people with severe reproaches.

There is always a spirit ready for mischief ; but if leading men do not support it, it flags again.

I believe there is nobody now in the House that delights more in these scuffles than Mr. Howe, and I imagine he will blow the coals both ways. If either side come into him, there will be no end of the wrangle ; and if neither applaud him, his eloquence will dry up.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

July 13, 1700.

We had an account yesterday of my Lord Privy Seal's death ;* he died on Wednesday at six in the evening. I believe we should not have heard of it so soon, but they had sent for a physician from London, and upon my Lord's death, they despatched a messenger with all diligence, to prevent the Doctor's journey. We don't yet hear whether they will send up the Privy Seal, or expect it should be sent for.

I suppose Mr. Yard will give your Grace an account that the Lords Justices met last night upon this news, and what they have writ to the King about the ulterior disposal of the Seal ; I have not seen him since, and therefore know nothing of it.

* Lord Lonsdale.

This seems to be an opportunity to make room for my Lord Godolphin at the Treasury, if the King likes my Lord Tankerville for Privy Seal. If my Lord Sunderland had been in business, I think he would have pressed it, but whether it agrees with other people's schemes, I know not.*

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

July 18, 1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 15th. Whether there be a necessity for a new Parliament, I know not; but my Lord Coningsby, believes the King will call one, and he knows the Tories both desire and expect it. What I have heard argued about it is, can business go forward in Parliament without management? Who is there now capable of managing? Have not the Whigs grown out of humour and resolved to sit still, if they do not worse? Is not the King under a necessity of taking in other apostates? Those who shall be depended on, are they not to be enabled to carry on the service by such ways as they judge most effectual? Would the King have the next session spent in wrangling, or that it should pass quietly? Is it not obvious that there may be different expectations from the last year of an old Parliament, or the first

* A letter is here omitted.

sitting down of a new one. In a concluding session do people consider any thing so much as the securing their next elections, and does not that naturally run them into an opposition against the Court, and setting up pretences for the good of the country ; whereas a new Parliament have not that so much in their thoughts ? Besides an old one having formed themselves into parties, whereas a number of new men break the designs of party men, and if there be a prudent and reasonable management for the Court, it is rather to be believed that fresh unbiassed men will go along with it.

To judge of these reasonings one ought to be satisfied in two things ; first, whether the Whigs are so incensed, or so jealous, that they resolve to be unconcerned lookers-on only, as to what relates to the public ? and next, whether the Tories have zeal enough for the government to take upon themselves the support of it, and have a strength to go through with it ?

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

July 20, 1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 17th. As to the treaty of Altona, it was made in the first year of the revolution, between the King of Denmark and the Duke of Holstein, who were then going together by the ears ; Sweden and the House

of Lunenburg supporting the Duke of Holstein, as they do now.

By that treaty, the Duke of Holstein was to be restored to all his lands; and some of them being made over to Prince George, for his portion, the mediators undertook to find out a way to satisfy him for those lands, which gave the occasion to the demand made last session.

By that treaty, the Duke of Holstein's right of sovereignty called *jus armorum et fortæ litiorum*, was again asserted; which was first granted him by the treaty of Roschold, and upon this foundation he encreased his troops, and began to fortify in the Eyder Stede, which gave the rise to this last quarrel.*

The mediators of the treaty of Altona, were the Emperor, the Elector of Saxony, and the Elector of Brandenburg. The King, and the States General, were great promoters of that treaty for preventing a war in the north, while there was a war begun with France, and they came into a guarantee for the support of it, with the Swedes, Lunenburgh, and others, in consequence of which guarantee the present assistance is given to the Duke of Holstein.

By what I can understand from my Lord Marlborough, he had much rather my Lord Godolphin should have the Privy Seal, than be in the Treasury.

* I give this paragraph as it stands in the copy of this letter, which is now under my eyes; but the reader will at once perceive it contains more than one mistake.—ED.

It is certainly easier and more honourable, but the King may expect more service from him in the other post, if the Treasury be to continue in commission, which I know no reason to doubt of. But I can't imagine if my Lord Rochester be designed to be at the head of affairs, that he can go into Ireland.

If there be a necessity of employing new managers, I don't think they will leave my Lord Tankerville where he is.

The Dutch post is not yet arrived, so we know not how matters go on the other side of the water.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

July 23, 1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 20th. When the princess goes to Winchester she will lie at the Deanery. She designs stopping there about three weeks, and will go after they have done hunting in the forest. She is very fond of hunting in her chaise: she was at the death of a stag on Saturday.

Sir Thomas Felton was telling me the other day, that he had been with Mr. Montague, who was pleased to speak kindly of me, and to mention it, as a misfortune, that there was a cold misunderstanding between me and the Whigs; and that he had often

spoke of it to your Grace with concern. I don't doubt but this has arisen from something my Lord Somers may have said to him. I desired Sir Thomas, if he heard any thing more of it, to say that I knew of no occasion I had given to any such coldness, unless it were that I happened to receive a great unsought for obligation from my Lord Sunderland, and I retained so grateful a sense of it, that I would serve him if it lay in my power. If there were any suspicions of my having been often with him when he was last in town, I must know best that they were very ill grounded. I was sorry to hear how much he was threatened without giving any provocation that I know of. I thought he aimed at the same thing that they did, and I was satisfied it would appear so at last.

In the meantime, without entering into resentments that I saw no reason for, I would pay the same respect to others I ever had done, and desired only to be treated as I should perform it.

Sir Thomas Felton thought this a fair proceeding, and when occasion serves he will make it rightly understood. I know no advantage any body will have by an irreconcilableness to my Lord Sunderland: it may help to keep him and them out of play, which the public will not be the better for.

I saw George Churchill yesterday, who tells me they have been examining four or five of Kidd's men, that were brought home by Benbow. They make all the same defence, that upon Kidd's producing to them a commission under the broad seal,

and another from the Admiralty, to seize the King's enemies and pirates, they engaged with him at New York, in the same manner they have done with other legal commanders, upon the foot of no purchase, no pay. When they were on board they were under his command, and it was death to disobey. They own the taking a ship or two that he ordered them to attack, and when that was done he made the division of the spoil among them, and gave every man his share. This he did at the island of St. Mary's, near Madagascar, and there he bought a sloop for himself and twenty-one more, the ship he went out in being unserviceable, and he told the rest of the men they must get home as well as they could.

Mr. Churchill tells me Sir Charles Hedges does not well know what to judge of this plea, more than that it is strong against Kidd.

None of these men will be tried till the meeting of the Parliament, who are to make the first judgment of their plea. Some to be sure will aggravate the entrusting such a man with such commissions.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

July 30, 1700.

I write to your Grace with a very heavy heart, since it is to give you an account that it has pleased

God to take the Duke of Gloucester from us. I did not hear of his being ill till Sunday morning. He died between twelve and one this morning. He had complained, a day or two before, of a pain in his head; on Saturday morning Dr. Hanns was sent for, who found his throat inflamed, and that it begun to swell. They took four ounces of blood from him, which gave him present ease; but he grew worse, and on Sunday Dr. Radcliffe and Dr. Gibbons came to him; they agreed in their prescriptions, but differed in their notions of his distemper. Dr. Radcliffe thought nature was pushing out the small-pox: Dr. Gibbons apprehended it a spotted fever. There were five blisters raised upon him, three were out and run well, but he got little sleep during his whole illness. He dosed a little, and then talked idly. At nine last night the doctors had great hopes, and thought him out of danger; but he changed again at ten, and now we have lost him.

God knows what will be the consequence of it; some comfort themselves with the hopes that his Majesty will now think of marrying. My Lord Marlborough has ordered the Duke's body to be opened and embalmed, but he waits for the Lords Justices' directions concerning the interment. They meet about it to-morrow.

My son was appointed to wait on the King with the letters from Windsor, and from the Lords Jus-

tices as having attended the Duke all the time of his sickness.

After seven or eight hours expecting him to come from Windsor, my Lord Marlborough sends me word that he was fallen ill ; his overwatching and concern for his master had put him into a fever. Dr. Hanns, I hear, has let him blood, so God knows how it is with him, but Mr. Lester, another of the Duke's servants, is sent in his stead.

My Lord and Lady Marlborough were sent for from Althorpe upon the Duke's illness, and did not get to Windsor till yesterday in the afternoon.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 27th, and have sent Mr. Guy's letter to Althorpe, where he now is.

Sure our impending calamities ought to inspire people with a spirit of reconciliation and union.

The Dutch mail is not yet arrived.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

August 3, 1700.

I have the honour of two of your Grace's letters of the 29th, and one of the 31st past ; that which relates to the deputy-lieutenants of Worcestershire, shall be carried to the Council on Thursday next.

I don't know but our misfortune in losing the Duke of Gloucester may bring more to be of Sir John Packington's mind. In relation to my Lord Somers, perhaps Sir John might have been for him personally; but if they don't likewise concur in such measures as my Lord Somers would advise, their private friendships will be of as little use to him as they are to the public.

As things have unluckily fallen out, there seems to be an opportunity for the Whigs to exert themselves upon their natural principle, the preservation of religion and liberty. Whether they will make use of it, I know not; but without their appearing vigorously, we shall not be long in doubt who is to be the successor; and if they espouse this cause again, they may do it with such warmth as to run down all their little diverting enquiries, about grants, Kidd, or the like. If this will not make them unanimous, and to exert themselves, every thing must be abandoned. I did not expect a direction I received from Mr. Blathwayte, to-day importing that the lieutenancies of Cumberland and Westmoreland being void by my Lord Lonsdale's death, the King would have a warrant sent over for constituting my Lord Wharton lord-lieutenant of Westmoreland. I should have obeyed it, but they are mistaken in the fact, for neither of these lieutenancies are vacant, being both long since given to my Lord Carlisle, and I suppose it is not their intention that he should be displaced.

In the meantime, I hear nothing of the Privy Seal, which is vacant. I have no letter this post from Sir George Rooke ; I am afraid the matter of the bombarding will be called in question. I know nothing that will prevent it but clapping up a peace in the meantime, which yet Mr. Cresset sees no likelihood of, unless a project come from the Hague. He despairs of any thing being done by the French Ambassador, who, he says, is a more dilatory mediator than the Imperial Minister was, and yet he is satisfied the troops will do nothing in Holstein. He says, they are like so many lawyers in armour, that meet only to wrangle and chicane, and that is all.

As to the Swedish descent, Mr. Grey writes that they do not much apprehend it at Copenhagen ; they think they have a force more than sufficient to beat them out again. Mr. Robinson makes their numbers designed for a transport much less than Sir George Rooke understood them : besides, it is now said that the King of Poland has passed the river Dwina, and they expect to hear of an action there, in probability to the disadvantage of Sweden.

The affairs of the confederates seem to be but in an unlucky situation ; what pleases me best is that Monsieur Plessis is come to Doerien, and has had an audience of the King. If he has any thing tolerable to propose, I hope his Majesty will close with it. I wish we had their Princess with a good peace.

I have been at Windsor to-day to see my son, who

I hope is in a fair way of recovery ; he gets some sleep, though he is still weak. Dr. Baboe tells me he must take his remedies seven or eight days longer.

The Prince and Princess see nobody but their own servants ; they are carried in chairs in the evenings to my Lord Godolphin's garden. They do not think of leaving Windsor.

Before the Duke died, I hear the Prince was much disturbed at the bombardments. I am afraid Sir George has no other warrant for it than a general instruction to act in the support of the guarantee, as shall be thought advisable by a council of flag officers.

The Swedes, no doubt, proposed and pressed these violences, and I believe Alemonde was very cool in them.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

August 6, 1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 3rd. Your considerations of our present state are so just, that I can't but let the King know your sentiments of the condition we are in, and what is fit to be done to mend it, which I hope he will seriously think of.

Some would have him marry, whether he have a

prospect of children or not; nobody can tell but there will be issue, and the expectation of it will give a better opportunity for a farther entail of the crown, in which the House of Hanover may be included, perhaps with less opposition than if they were immediately and directly aimed at. I think it unlucky it was not done at first, for since that time the French have let in to concern themselves with our succession on account of the Duchess of Burgundy, though she has a brother, yet they will term it an injury they can't suffer, that the Savoy family should be passed by. But if we are to have a dispute with them in this matter, it is better it should be while the Spanish succession is depending. They will have their heads and hands pretty full of that, and perhaps will be less willing to break with us at this than another time.

The three months, in which the Emperor was to declare himself as to that treaty, is now very near expiring. I think there is no expectation that he will come into it, and then we shall have a new jumble of interest to balance the power of France.

If the King marries, many wish he would take the Princess of Denmark: it would be a good means to stifle all grudges between us. She is a lady of three or four-and-twenty, as fit an age as any for children.

The Landgrave of Hesse's daughter is a year or two younger, but she has so many brothers and kindred that would not be very welcome here.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

August 8, 1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 5th. I have heard nothing of late concerning a new Parliament, but I believe those who had it in their thoughts before may be so set upon it as not to alter their opinions upon what has happened. I am so charitable as to believe that some of them intend to preserve the constitution, but they would do it their own way, and have the merit of it. They propose to meet with a number of people in a new Parliament, whom they may influence, and shew how capable they are to manage; but as they may be mistaken, and mistakes of this kind would be fatal, I hope we shall not see things put upon such desperate trials. On the other side, I think the King ought to be one way or another assured how people are disposed to act, and that all private resentments shall give way to the common safety. I don't doubt but people would rather follow their former leaders, if they go on with the vigour they were used to shew, where the public was concerned, but if they falter in it, I hope there is that spirit in the kingdom, which will exert itself under any that will shew them the way to their preservation.

Whatever may have been intended about the dissolving this Parliament, I never imagined it could be thought of during the King's absence. I suppose as one is broke, another should be called;

and I thought writs issued by the Lords Justices would be superseded by the King's return. Some have rather imagined that the King would come back the sooner, that a new Parliament might be called, to meet immediately after Christmas. But now I think he ought to come home early, that this Parliament may meet before Christmas: the longer we are kept from our settlement, the more hardly we shall come at it.

A Dutch post arrived yesterday, which brought several material advices; and therefore, I have extracted the particulars more at large, and send them enclosed. There seems now some prospect that these troubles in the north will have an end, and if it be done without the French, perhaps it is never the worse. If the Danes think the French have juggled with them, and have not given them the assistance they expected, it may turn to the Emperor's advantage, and harden him the more against the Spanish succession.

Captain Long, who was a Quaker, and went to the West Indies about the gold mine, came to me to-day to tell me that he is a near neighbour of a fishmonger towards London Bridge: I think he said his name was Jackson, but I am not sure of it: this man's grandson was with Long in his late voyage. The fishmonger happens to be a relation of Kidd's wife, and on that account has obtained leave of the Lords of the Admiralty to see him in prison, which, he says, nobody else does, but his keeper. He has talked to Long several times

about Kidd, that he does not appear much concerned ; but what is most remarkable, that Kidd told him he pressed his owners, when the Adventure galley was fitting out, that the seamen might have wages ordered them. But he was answered, that they must go upon no purchase, no pay ; upon which, he replied, that it could not then be avoided, but they would turn pirates.

I asked Long whether he mentioned which of the owners made him that answer ? He had not, I perceive, been so nice in his enquiries ; but he thought it was my Lord Orford, he often mentioning him as one of the owners.

I have not heard that Kidd said any thing of this nature at his examination, and therefore asked him, whether this fishmonger was capable of putting any such thing in his head ? He thought not, since he was an ancient plain man, and a rigid Independent.

I bid him take an opportunity to be better informed which of the owners was particularly named upon this occasion ; that he should be sure to do it in accidental discourse, and not as if he were employed to ask it. When I hear from him again, perhaps it may not be amiss that I should say something of it to Sir Edmund Harrison. If any thing has been said about no purchase, no pay, I take it for granted it has been Kidd's own proposal.

There was no council this morning, for want of a sufficient number to attend it, so that your Grace's

letter and list is not yet read, but lies in the clerk's hands.

My Lord Jersey goes this evening for Holland, and embarks in the river.

Enclosed is the Earl Marshal's arrangement of the funeral to-morrow. The chief mourner must be contented with a less number than ten of the principal nobility for his assistants.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

August 10, 1700.

I suppose your Grace has returned from the precipices of Wales, and I hope you are well at Boughton.

I don't know what ——— * can be made of this meeting. I am sure this is a time when people ought to know one another's minds, and take resolutions for the common safety. There seems to be a wrong notion getting up, that people should rely on the King's marrying, and trouble themselves no further.

The King is in better health, and he hopes for peace in the north; he is much afflicted with the Duke of Gloucester's death.

The French are greatly elated; the King of

* Two words illegible.

France proposes, it is said, to give 20,000 pistoles per annum to the Prince of Wales.

Mr. Blathwayte is intriguing to secure to himself the propriety of New Hampshire, notwithstanding the counter efforts of Allen.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY,

August 13, 1700.

People begin to open themselves, whether the House of Hanover shall be taken into the settlement of the Crown, and, by what I can find, we shall make it a party business.

It is supposed the Tories are for it, and therefore the Whigs must not approve of it. But they will think nothing more is to be done, than to desire the King to marry; if he has any such thoughts, I hope he will not stay to be entreated.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

August 15, 1700.

The House of Hanover is much spoken of. The objection is, "What, must we have more foreigners?" which is not very obliging towards the King. But I hope people will at last resolve, that it is better to have a Prince from Germany, than one from France.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

August 22, 1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 19th. You will have another letter from the council about Mr. Coningsby ; Mr. Povey, not finding it in the list, omitted it, but he has mentioned it in your letter.

I shall let the King know to-morrow what your Grace's thoughts are of the posture we are in ; and I am glad he will receive it so fully from one whose judgment he has a great opinion of.

I doubt whether he will let his own mind be known, before he comes over himself ; but I hope, too, he will reserve all resolutions about the Parliament till that time.

If Mr. Guy knows the opinions of those he converses with, one would think they were zealous both for the King's marriage, and adding the House of Hanover to the settlement, which was the way taken on the 8th of Queen Elizabeth. The House of Lords then addressed to the Queen about her marriage, and yet at the same time, thought a successor should be appointed, in case she had no issue.

I wish our friends do not go a little awkwardly into this business ; I am afraid they expect to be courted to it by the King ; and, for aught I know, he will think it more the nation's business than his

own. It must be helped forward with a good deal of firmness, and therefore, I hope these gentlemen will take some pains to keep those they influence from running into wrong notions, for want of knowing what they wish for. Those who lay this matter to heart, as they ought to do, should not refuse any assistances to bring it about. If they will quarrel about other things, the public may still be safe. I do apprehend that we shall have enough to do with France in this matter, who will use all insinuations and threats to divert it. It is said, the French Court begin to be already jealous of us, even in relation to the Spanish treaty, and that it was much increased by our pressing on the northern affairs to a conclusion faster than they would have had it.

Now, the Emperor has refused to come into the treaty, and has claimed the whole succession to himself; I don't doubt but the French will think we have played fast and loose with them. By the Emperor's peremptory answer, one may consider the Emperor is pretty well assured that the Princes of Germany will stick by him, and that a good confederacy is to be made in Italy.

They say, the Elector of Brandenburg, courting the Emperor for his consent to a kingship in Prussia, which he is fond of, has promised the Emperor to assist him with 6,000 men in Italy, whenever he has occasion for them.

The Danes had promised the French they would

come into the treaty, while they were likewise buoyed up with the promises of what the French would do for them; but that coming to little, the Duke of Wirtemberg told Mr. Cresset, that the King of Denmark thinks he has made an unadvised engagement with them. Perhaps he may boggle at going further.

As soon as the courier arrived with the Emperor's answer, the pensioner went to Loo, and the two Ambassadors of France intended to go thither the next day. Now all thoughts will be turned to see how that business works.

The Spaniards have made an end of the business of Schonenberg, having admitted him to the functions of his character, that they might be at liberty to send their ministers to England and to Holland.

Don Quieros was expected within a day or two at the Hague, and either he or another will be in England this winter.

In the meantime, Dr. Davenant is preparing a book against the Spanish treaty. I don't doubt but we shall have many records brought to prove that treaties are not to be made without the consent of Parliament. Some say there is but that, and the disposal of offices by Parliament, to bring us as near a commonwealth as they desire.

Monsieur Hofman tells me that the answer Comte de Torcy made to the Emperor's envoy was, that his master was sorry that his good intentions for preserving the peace were not better understood; and

then took notice of the Emperor's offering his troops to the King of Spain, for supplying his garrisons in Italy, which he said was an infraction of the peace. The envoy answered, that he did not know any such thing was intended, and if it were, he could not understand that any treaty disallowed it.

I think we ought not to be sorry that they are upon those terms, for if the Emperor and the French King had agreed about the Spanish succession, they would, with much less difficulty, have agreed about ours.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

August 27, 1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 24th. Though I have not heard from Paris these two last posts, my Lord Manchester being ill of a fever, yet I don't think that either my Lord Middleton is gone to Scotland with the Prince of Wales, or that he is like to go thither. They themselves will not venture him among the Presbyterians there, nor dare they send him away without the King of France's leave, who will hardly consent to it at this instant, when we are so intrigued together about the Spanish succession.

I reckon whenever the Prince of Wales comes hither, it will be by so strong a hand from France as will subdue this nation for themselves, and make him the pretence only for obtaining an easier conquest. I am sorry, therefore, to hear what the

Archbishop told me yesterday, that by his advices out of the country, he feared there was an ill spirit working towards* the Prince of Wales. I asked him if the clergy gave into it; he said, not those he corresponded with, but one may conclude they observed it in some others. If this be the case, I don't see what settlement we can have by our new undertaking, and your Grace has a great deal of reason to dislike the calling a new Parliament till this has laid a foundation for our future security.

When the King comes to resolve what he will do, there is no doubt but he will advise with the chief of those who are best able to promote it; but, in the meantime, I think those who wish well to the government should let their sentiments be known, what they judge necessary for establishing it, to prevent peoples' running into different opinions, which, some being possessed with, will be more difficultly removed.

I hear it said already, that the bringing in the House of Hanover is a project from Althorpe. If prejudices against persons are to destroy the nature of things, I don't know whither that will carry us. The experience my Lord Sunderland has had in public affairs may enable him to make a right judgment, and I know not what interest he has in this more than any one else that desires to be safe; for I believe him in what he says, that he grows old, and does not care to meddle more.

* This must mean "in favour of."

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

August 29, 1700.*

I hope the King of Spain is better. I think that, in case of his death, the King of France will be active, though he will not expect any assistance from England or Holland.

I suppose it will be difficult to engage the princes of the empire, as they will probably concur with the Emperor.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

August 31, 1700.†

Sir William Norris has had an interview with the King of Golconda. Aureng Zebe is pleased with his arrival, and orders him to be conducted with pomp to his camp.

The exiled King and Queen are in great spirits at St. Germain.

* Considerable parts of several letters at this period are evidently wanting.

† A part of this letter I have omitted, as of no material import.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

August 31, 1700.

We had a Dutch post yesterday, which brought me letters from Sir George Rooke, of the 20th instant, o. s. He says the Swedes were making all the haste out of Zealand that they could. The Danes lent them some transport vessels for the greater dispatch. The Swedish foot was then all embarked. Sir George would have sent away the biggest ships, but that the Danes' fleet was drawn out of harbour. So that he and Monsieur Allemonde will stay till they see the Swedes fleet over the Grounds, or beyond the Buoys, and then he says they shall come homeward,—if, as his expression is, they have not caught a tartar; meaning, as I suppose, that the Danes may hinder it if they will play tricks.

I shall be glad, therefore, to hear that all was well over. I perceive Sir George Rooke is to command the convoy that attends his Majesty in his return hither.

Mr. Blathwayte writes to him, that if he will, he may stop upon the coast of Holland, with the ships designed for his Majesty's convoy, if they have provisions sufficient, it being his Majesty's intention to be in England before the middle of October. This is the first notice I have met withal of the time

of the King's coming over, and I did not expect to hear it first from the Sound. But Sir George intends to come with the whole squadron directly to the Downs, as well for taking in a supply of provisions, as for the conveniency of paying off some ships, in order to bring this year's expence the more within compass. And he proposes to sail again with the convoy to Holland at the end of September.

The new Company have a ship arrived from India, which is their first. It brings me a letter from Sir William Norris, bearing date at the King of Golconda's palace.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

September 24, 1700.*

Lord Portland pretends to know nothing of the King's sentiments, and says he has not seen him for six weeks. He thinks his health is better, and that he would quite recover if he were to reside at Loo.

Sir James Forbes tells me that my Lord Steward seems to have particular notions about the succession. He makes no scruple of coming up to any thing that may put an exclusion upon King James and the Prince of Wales, and he does not

* The letters from Vernon to Shrewsbury now become fewer, and, very unfortunately, leave us in the dark at that important period where the last great changes in William III.'s councils were slowly working themselves out.

care how soon, and how strongly that is done. But he thinks the nation will not submit to any more foreigners.

My Lord Marlborough has not been at Windsor yet; he came from Althorpe to St. Alban's on Sunday last. He tells me that my Lord Sunderland has no thought of coming to London this winter.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

October 5, 1700.

I have received the honour of your Grace's letters of Tuesday and Thursday last. I hope you got well to Grafton, and that you had satisfaction in your visit to my Lord Sunderland.

People are very apt here to believe every thing amiss of him, and he now suffers in their good opinion upon Sir William Sympson's account. They make it a charge upon him that Sir William Sympson went out of the way in his speech to recommend Sir Charles Duncomb to the mayoralty; they say Sir William went further,—that he went in person to the aldermen's houses to solicit for Sir Charles, particularly that he was with Sir Robert Clayton on Tuesday night, and made use of my Lord Sunderland's name to engage his vote, as if he were employed by him for that purpose. I did not think

this story very credible when I first heard it, and I hear since that Sir William utterly denies, not only the making use of my Lord Sunderland's name, but that he any way solicited or spoke to any man for Duncomb, more than what was in his speech.

Duncomb has met with a disappointment where he thought himself sure. His friends looked upon it that they had the solemn engagement of thirteen aldermen; but when they came to vote, though all were present, there were fourteen for Sir Thomas Abney, and only twelve for Duncomb, and they can't yet find out who it was that has failed them. The aldermen don't give their votes publicly, but they go down a table where the recorder, common serjeant, and town clerk are sitting, and as they name who they are for, the town clerk marks it upon the paper he has before him with the names of the candidates, and a line drawn from them in this manner—

Sir Thomas Abney -/-/-/-/-

Sir Charles Duncomb . . -/-/-/-/-

The first suspicion fell upon Sir William Gore, for which he met with severe reproaches from the old East India Company; but he has purged himself by all manner of asseverations that he voted for Duncomb.

The jealousy, therefore, is now divided between Sir John Parsons and Sir Joseph Smart; the first of them went immediately for Newmarket as soon as he had given his vote; the other says he always

refused to declare who he was for before the election, and that he will stick to it still.

There was a Court of Aldermen held on Thursday, where were eleven of Duncomb's friends, and nine that were against him. They had a debate about this scrutiny; some raised a doubt as if it had not been fairly taken; but the three officers offered to make oath that no error was committed; when Duncomb told the common serjeant of the thirteen he was sure of. He answered, he was more sure that there was no thirteen on that bench would tell him to his face that they voted for Sir Charles.

Some proposed that every alderman should declare who he was for, but that was opposed as contrary to all practice, and that they ought not to suffer their forms to be innovated. However, they carried it that this debate should be adjourned till Tuesday next, when they are to meet again, and to have the paper of the scrutiny before them.

Sir Thomas Coke is outrageous in this matter; when the poll was cast up on Tuesday, and he saw by what a majority Duncomb had carried it, he said all their elections should go in the same manner, and they would never suffer a Whig among them more; and he is still doing all he can to overthrow the election.

It is said that all this bustle is made in the Court of Aldermen only to incense people; great numbers were got together in Guildhall on Thursday, who asked very clamorously when the Court broke up,

who was to be their mayor, and Duncomb's name was cried up with loud shouts and huzzas.

The new mayor is to be presented to my Lord Mayor on Wednesday next, to take an oath before him. If that get well over, I hope all things will grow quiet again.

We have had no Dutch post since Thursday last.

My Lord Bradford is come to town to-day, and is pretty well again.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

October 10, 1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 7th; I have likewise heard from my Lord Sunderland, who seems mightily satisfied with your visit. I believe his apprehensions are very just,—that if there be not a visible successor appointed, the Prince of Wales will be put upon us very soon.

The talk revives here of a new Parliament, but nobody that I meet with knows any ground for it.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

October 12, 1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 9th. My Lord Manchester sent me one of the papers that King James has lately printed in French,

and are the same that were printed in English soon after King Charles's death, and attested by King James that he found them in his brother's cabinet, written with his own hand,* to which is added a paper said to be writ by the Duchess of York, giving an account of the reasons that made her turn papist.

The whole impression of these papers is in King James's hands, and he distributes them himself. He has done it hitherto only to the foreign ministers of his own persuasion, who make no account of them, as not thinking their profession much advantaged by such arguments, nor seeing any other use of them.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

April 21, 1701.†

I don't doubt but your Grace will excuse my not having writ to you of late, since you must have heard

* Giving his reasons for returning to the Roman church.

† Between the date of this letter and that which precedes it, a period of nearly six months had elapsed, during which, many important events had taken place, of which it is only possible here to give a brief summary. William returned to England on the 18th of October. Almost immediately after Shrewsbury came to London to demand the King's permission to seek a change of climate, and having obtained it, spent the greater part of one whole day in conference with William at Hampton Court. We have already seen that he had visited Lord Sunderland at Althorpe, and there is clear proof that he had become thoroughly disgusted with the general conduct of the Whigs. Various indications too are offered by these letters of his having now more fully entered

what affairs I have had upon my hands, and in what manner I have been pressed.

into the political views of Sunderland, of his having made up his mind to the absolute necessity of calling the House of Hanover to the succession, of announcing that fact openly, of endeavouring to go on with the Parliament as it then was constituted, and of giving a greater preponderance in the councils of the King to that party which had shown itself capable of managing the House of Commons, when the Whigs were either incapable or unwilling to do so. It is probable that he expected, by admitting Harley and some of his friends into power, to separate the Tory party from the Jacobite party, which had become mixed together, but not thoroughly amalgamated. What were the particulars of his long interview with the King can never be known; but we may feel sure that he therein gave William a complete view of his political judgment of the state of England. This happened on the 28th of October; he quitted London on the 1st of November, and was in France on the 4th of November. In the beginning of November new changes took place in the administration. Lord Godolphin, though it seems he would have preferred the Privy Seal, vacant by the death of Lord Lonsdale, was put at the head of the Treasury; Lord Tankerville was appointed Privy Seal; Sir Charles Hedges was made Secretary of State; Harcourt was Solicitor General. Montague retaining the Auditor's post, could scarcely be looked upon as a minister, and shortly after created Lord Halifax, retired to the House of Peers; so that the expression of Lord Orford was now fully justified, and William had not a Whig in his service. Nevertheless, the King's predilections gave the Tories some apprehension. Harley was not provided for in the ministry, though, with the King's assent, he became Speaker of the House of Commons, and it seems to have been resolved by his friends to drive the leading Whigs for ever from the council by impeachment, and to force the King to submit blindly to their dictation. The point on which they determined to fix their charge was the partition treaty, and articles of impeachment were accordingly drawn up against Lords Portland, Somers, Orford, and Halifax. Vernon, and some of the others who had been implicated, escaped; but Vernon was ordered by the House to produce the correspondence between himself and Lord Portland, which he did, with more facility than the Whigs thought justifiable.

I believe you have had so full and just accounts of this whole proceeding from those who were acquainted with every step that was made, and knew my intimate thoughts from the beginning to the end, that I need not trouble you with repetitions. I hope I shall not appear to you to have acted otherwise than as became me under such hard circumstances. Next to the quiet and satisfaction of one's own mind, I shall most value the being justified in your Grace's opinion.

After my Lord Portland had named me as the person by whose advice he had concerned himself in negotiating the Treaty of Partition, it was impossible for me to have withstood the producing what was commanded, unless one would be undone to no purpose, for my Lord Portland was resolved to produce my letters of 1698 at his trial; and if Sir Joseph Williamson, who was concerned in that treaty, had been questioned about it, he would have told all he knew, which would have made the same discovery, perhaps in a worse manner. I am sorry for the consequences it has had, which have been pretty violent; but it is visible these heats don't arise upon the subject matter, but are resolutions formed to take any occasion for excluding those they have so great an aversion to from ever coming into power again. They took care to notify nobody else, and your Grace has been treated with great distinction in all these enquiries where your name appeared.

I hear the persons attacked are not a little offended with me ; but it is not very just in them not to consider the necessity I was under. My Lord Somers had not a greater for producing his own letter and the King's, nor (as it has happened) did he do himself more right in it.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 15, 1701.

I have the honour of your Grace's letters of the 6th and 18th. I am sorry your Grace finds such returns of your old distemper ; it was very unlucky you quitted Montpellier so soon, where the air agrees so well with you.

The King is much as he was as to the swelling of his legs : he will not confine himself to doctors' rules, and this week he has had a small aguish fit or two, but he seems to be very well this morning.

Our parliamentary affairs have been pretty chagrining this winter, and I don't perceive they grow better. New addresses are made for striking the impeached lords out of the council books. How they will be complied with I don't know. On the other side, the threats continue of taking the 100,000*l.* from the Civil List.

There grows a great ferment likewise out of the

House, which begins to make our topping men uneasy. They are endeavouring to suppress petitions,* and perhaps the means they may use for it may blow them up higher. This is no very good condition for providing against foreign dangers.

We must either of all sides abate of our violence, or that will soon bring us to confusion. Those are happiest that only hear of it, and do not see it.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

June 9, 1701.

* * * * *

Accommodations are talked of, but how they are like to succeed I know not. If the Imperialists keep their footing in Italy,† the war is like to spread itself further. I hope we shall have a little respite from our domestic broils, which have been strangely violent. The House of Lords have exerted

* It was about this time that the famous Kentish petition was presented, which was voted scandalous and seditious, and the persons presenting it committed to the Gate-house. This was followed by the famous memorial signed Legion, ending with the remarkable words, "Englishmen are no more to be slaves to Parliaments than to Kings."

† By this period Charles II., of Spain, had closed his eyes, appointing Philip, Duke of Anjou, his universal heir. Louis XIV., in defiance of all treaties, had accepted the will for his grandsons, and was attempting to plunder him of the Netherlands; while the Emperor, ill-used and indignant, was maintaining, with success, his claims upon the Italian part of the Spanish succession.

themselves in opposition to these extraordinary proceedings, which I hope may put a check to them hereafter.

I hope the session will end in five or six days more. If so, it is thought the King may be going for Holland by the end of the next week; and then we shall soon be resolved whether we have peace or war.

The French have abated of their stiffness in relation to Mr. Stanhope: they are now willing to admit him into the conferences, but would still lay a restraint that the conferences should extend no further than the concerns of England and Holland, by which they would exclude the making any mention of the Emperor's interests.

But it being already at the head of our demands that the Emperor should have reasonable satisfaction given him for his pretensions, I don't see how we can abandon him without exposing our own security.

Your Grace will find that my Lord Marlborough is to have the command of the forces in Holland,* with the title of General of the Foot.

This is a post the Duke of Ormond aimed at; and they say he does not well bear the disappointment. Those that are uneasy learn now every day how to make the others so too. One cannot, there-

* The French monarch's proceedings in Flanders had entirely overthrown the Barrier Treaty, and it was evident to every one that a general war must speedily take place.

fore, but pity those who come upon the public stage.

Captain Fisher has been applying to the secret committee that manages the impeachments. He, or somebody writ a letter to the committee without a name, pretending he could say something material, concerning some of the impeached Lords. Upon which he was sent for, and when they heard his story about the plot, they looked upon him as a trepan, and dismissed him.

The matter of the prize office is like to lie for another year, then to be made use of according to the humour they are in. I never expected to hear so much of it, and don't know when one shall see an end of it.

The Speaker* has often desired me to assure your Grace of his respects, and I believe he is cordial in it, and would be glad to stand well in your opinion.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

June 23, 1701.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 20th. If you can find a benefit by staying abroad, it is certainly more advisable than coming into this unquiet country, where we are torn to pieces by

* Mr. Harley.

parties and animosities ; for my part, I see no end of them, and the unhappy condition of it is, those that are in them have enemies enough, and those that keep out have no friends.

I suppose we shall have a cessation till winter, since it is expected the session will end to-morrow. We have stayed some days for my Lord Orford's trial, which is now over. He was acquitted by all the Peers present, who were forty-four in number *. Those who would have dissented expressed it in their own house, and forbore coming into Westminster-Hall.

My Lord Halifax will give no delay on his account. I suppose he does not offend his friends in it, and others seem so satisfied that he has not pressed on his trial in spite of them, that they look upon him as the most effectually discharged.

The Lords have put another slur upon the Commons in the amendments they made this day to the bill for stating the public accounts. Sir Bartholomew Shower, and Dr. Davenant, † two of the seven commissioners appointed by the Commons, are struck

* His trial followed that of Lord Somers, upon the impeachment of the Commons regarding the Partition Treaty. The Commons failed to appear to sustain their impeachment, upon the most frivolous pretences, and while the Peers acquitted the accused, even Englishmen were taught for once to see and condemn party rancour and factious violence, as displayed by the lower house.

† Charles Davenant, son of Sir William, who had told some unpleasant truths in regard to the state of the church at that time.

out, one for being a lawyer and having other business to do, and the other for abusing the church in his last book, which says men were preferred for being socinians.

We shall see to-morrow whether the Commons will bear this alteration, as also the striking out two other clauses that were very severe in the manner they would oblige Mr. Parkhurst, and Mr. Pascall, to make up the accounts of prizes. The other clause was for inflicting the same penalties on Whitaker, the Solicitor to the Admiralty, if his accounts were not made up in a short limited time, to the satisfaction of the commissioners.

There are new ways found out of bringing men that are disagreeable to them under the terrors of an inquisition; and as I have been unfortunately concerned in the prize office, I don't see what end there will be of the troubles it is made liable to.

My Lord Sunderland is expected in town to-morrow; his journey is calculated for the rising of the Parliament, but what effect it will have God knows. It has made a great deal of noise, and there are divided opinions about it. I don't know the secret of it, nor can I guess at any scheme that will put us at quiet. I think the best use I can make of it is to desire he will let me out as he helped me in, for I am altogether unfit for so turbulent a station.

I believe the King will be going for Holland at the beginning of next week; he has ordered his

convoy to be in readiness in Margate road on Monday next, and what is to be done in the meantime I can't imagine.

My Lord Rochester has been indisposed these four or five days, with a kind of a fever upon the spirits ; but I hear he is better.

I send your Grace his Majesty's approbation of Mr. Foley for a deputy-lieutenant. My Lord Coningsby does not insist upon Chaplin, but submits to your Grace's reasons for dropping him.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

July 19, 1701.*

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 15th. I am afraid we shall not be much quieter the next winter than we were the last ; people are too restless for such a blessing.

I wish those that are afraid of this Parliament, do not take improper methods to be rid of it, and entangle themselves further by their impatience. I find endeavours will be used at the approaching circuits, to stir up people to petition for a new Parliament ; that would be of weight, if it were done

* Shrewsbury was in the South of Europe during all this period, and the dates may appear strange from the difference of styles, Vernon using the old style, Shrewsbury the new.

by the impulse of a nation, and there appeared a free and general concurrence in it; but if it be done by the dint of solicitation, I don't know but it may rather have a bad than a good effect.

There are other matters now coming on, that people may shew their public spiritedness in, and if those only were pursued, I think all other advantages will follow; but if the contest be only kept up, whose party shall be uppermost, it will be a very dangerous and useless strife. Making entertainment for the Kentish petitioners,* and bringing actions against the Serjeant of the House of Commons, on account of their commitment, are in my judgment but poor projects, and tend only to perpetuate strife.

My Lord Sunderland returned to Althorpe on Tuesday, but I don't think he has made any great figure here. He declared to every body at his going away, he would come up no more. It could not certainly be worth the while to come so far, and stay so long, to take such a resolution at last. He conversed with the chief of all sorts, and perhaps has made a right judgment, that matters were not ripe for his engaging with either; but his turning his back upon them in that manner, lays in no stock of obligation for the future.

* Who had been committed to the Gate House.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

July 21, 1701.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 18th, and have given Mr. Blathwayte notice that the projector is gone on his journey to make proof of his invention.

My Lord Carlisle has lost his brother; he died last week of the small-pox, at a house my Lord has hired of my Lady Grimstone, in Hertfordshire.

My Lady Marlborough is preparing to go after her husband to Holland.

I believe my Lord Rochester may be going for Ireland about Thursday se'nnight. He sends his retinue before to Chester, and will go from hence privately.

I see little appearance now of endeavours to procure a new Parliament. I suppose people were not found enough disposed for it, and it would have been a very imprudent attempt to miscarry in. Some will have it that it was particularly laboured in Worcestershire. It will be better for the nation if all concur to promote quiet among ourselves. We seem to be enough threatened with danger from without.

July 28, 1701.

If there have been any thoughts of petitioning about a new Parliament, I think they are laid asleep.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

August 7, 1701.

Having the enclosed letter to send your Grace from the Bishop of Oxford, I must not omit acquainting you that we now begin to hear of addresses from the Grand Juries at some of the Assizes. They opened at Winchester and Buckingham, the former was presented to the Lords Justices this morning by Mr. Norton and Mr. Henley, who desired in the name of their brethren that their Excellencies would please to send their address to the King, wherein they acknowledge the great obligations the nation has to his Majesty for their deliverance from popery and slavery: and they hope his Majesty will work out another deliverance for them, from the oppressions the powerful conjunction of France and Spain threatens them with.

They attribute their great dangers to the late meeting of the Parliament, and they promise when another Parliament is called, they will choose such members as shall promote his Majesty's great designs for the good of Europe.

Sir Richard Temple was foreman of the Grand Jury in Buckinghamshire, where they made the like address, and put it into the hands of my Lord Chief Justice Trevor, who harangued against it.

Eight of the Grand Jury of Buckinghamshire refused to sign it. Mr. Atterbury, who was formerly a messenger, being at the head of them. Those, my Lord Chief Justice said, were more to be commended than the thirteen that signed. In Hampshire three only dissented, and twenty signed. They say the three that refused were men of very small estates.

My Lord Rochester defers his journey till he hears from the King about the Northern Justices.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Whitehall, September 1, 1701.

I received this day the honour of your Grace's letter of the 31st of August, and hope you are got well over the mountains.

There is little worth acquainting you with from hence; the parties are every day writing and printing against one another with great bitterness, and the chiefs seem to have a hand in it, which makes me think we must have as decisive a blow for the mastery next session, as now we expect one from Italy.

Since Sir Humphrey Mackworth's Vindication of the rights of the Commons as to impeachments, another book is come out in the same volume, called

the “Vindication of the Proceedings of the Commons in the last Session,” which is said to be writ by the Speaker. It sets forth all their resolutions in relation to foreign affairs, and the King’s answers approving of them, with a comment upon them, to show what prudent steps were made by the House, and how rash others were that would have had an immediate declaration of war, without giving time either to ourselves or our neighbours to be in a posture for it. But they say they did it only to preserve themselves from being called to account for their rapine and plunder, and for the same end they endeavoured to embroil the two Houses, and are now turning every stone to get rid of this Parliament, though it has given more than ever was given in time of peace, and have shewed their zeal against King James and popery, by the Bill of Succession, and their disinterestedness and care of the public by excluding men in office out of the House, and by the Bill of Privileges.

As my Lord Somers is more particularly glanced at in all their pamphlets, for adultery, socinianism, and I know not what besides; so the other side seem to single out my Lord Rochester for their mark to shoot at. Somebody has lately put out a pretended vindication of him from false and scandalous reports, only to rub up the memory of his having been in the ecclesiastical commission, of the

speech he made to the King of Poland, of the leaves torn out in the farmer's account of the hearth-money, of his balancing in his religion when he admitted of a conference of priests and divines. The irony is carried on with a great deal of smartness, involving some others they have a mind to expose, as the Bishop of Rochester, the Marquis of Normanby, Sir Charles Hedges, Sir Bartholemew Shower, and Sir Humphrey Mackworth.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

October 17, 1701.

Mr. Walsh sent me the enclosed letter for your Grace almost a week ago, which I kept till now, Mr. Yard telling me the Italian post goes but once a week, and our correspondence by the way of France is cut off by my Lord Manchester's coming away,* and his Secretary's being since sent away by order of the French Court.

I don't doubt but Mr. Walsh sends you the

* William III. had gone to Holland in July, accompanied by Lord Marlborough, whom he employed as negociator in concluding arrangements for a general alliance to circumscribe the power of France, to make compensation to the Emperor, and to protect Holland by a barrier of fortresses. In the meantime, however, James II. died on the 16th September, and Louis XIV. acknowledging his son as King of England, the British Ambassador was recalled from the Court of France.

address that has been framed in Worcestershire ; they have put a sting into it, and yet they say it has been signed by the Bishop and Dean of Worcester, and by my Lord Coventry. They have deferred the presenting it till the King's coming over ; but, in the meantime, it is printed in the *Flying Post*, which should not have been done. I know not whether it were designed to set a pattern to those that would follow it.

Mr. How has prevailed with his Grand Jury to accept of an address of his drawing up. It is worded strongly enough in relation to France and the Prince of Wales, but the House of Commons is brought in as having given that county great satisfaction by the resolutions they had taken about alliances, and the reducing the power of France, which his Majesty had so well approved of.

Mr. Colchester, one of the Justices and Colonel of the Militia, told him that he did not understand his mixing things together that had no connection ; but since his design was to draw the county in to applaud their representatives, he would tell him they were so ill-satisfied, with his being one that they would not choose him again.

The great expectation is, whether there is to be a new Parliament or not. The Whigs are earnest that this may be dissolved, but I don't find the Tories very apprehensive of it ; however, both sides are making their interests for new elections. I can't tell whether the case will be much altered by

it. I am told that my Lord Hartington and Lord de Ros will find great difficulty to be chosen again in Derbyshire, Mr. Cook and Mr. Curzon opposing them, and the argument against being represented by two Lords, is very prevalent among the freeholders.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

November 28, 1701.

I received the honour of your Grace's letter of the 15th inst., N. S., at the beginning of this week.

I have not seen the King since, being engaged in a Westminster election, which happily ended last night in a much shorter time than it used to do. The poll only lasted three days, by reason it was taken in Covent Garden Church porch, and many clerks were employed, so that six or seven could poll at a time, and every body that came were presently despatched.

Sir John Leveson Gower was set up against me, upon a very plausible pretence. He having brought in the bill that takes away the privilege of Parliament in cases of debt, which several tradesmen have found a benefit by, and great use was made of it to recommend him to all the rest. In probability, the argument would have prevailed more if he had

not been liable to exceptions, by his warm behaviour in the House upon other points, which made the Whigs in general great sticklers against him, and engaged them for Sir Harry Colt.

I was over persuaded by some, whom I thought leading men, to join with Cross, who served for Westminster in the last Parliament. When I did it, I did not know that Sir Harry was such a favourite, the turn being made of a sudden; nor could I imagine that Cross was so obnoxious as I found afterwards. I am still ignorant how he voted last session, but the cry ran that he herded among the Tories. However, having given him my word, I would not be persuaded to separate from him; I thought that too mean and infamous.

The event has justified it, since I maintained my integrity without losing the election. I only lost my solicitations in his behalf, people being obstinately averse to him, which I was so just as to tell him as soon as I perceived it.

At the conclusion of our poll the votes stood thus: for

Sir Harry Colt . . . 3013	Mr. Cross 1649
The Secretary . . . 2997	Sir John Leveson Gower . 1633

Lord Somers, Lord Orford, and Lord Halifax

espoused Sir Harry's interest very warmly when they declared for him, which was not till four or five days after the dissolution; and when they saw Sir John Leveson Gower resolved to stand here, which kept them two from joining, they sent me word they did not intend me any prejudice by it. I do not know how many votes they made me, but I think they took none from me.

I have since been with my Lord Halifax, and made my compliments, so that all matters seem to be pretty well forgot, and perhaps there was no need of their having been remembered so long.

I wish the people all over England would choose with the same spirit they have done in Westminster, London, and Southwark, where they have shewn great aversion to Jacobitism, and a French faction, notwithstanding the powerful endeavours to support it.

My Lord Chamberlain sent to his tradesmen in behalf of Sir John Leveson Gower, as he writ to Cambridge for Mr. Hammond.

My Lord Keeper's steward polled here for Sir John only, and two of his chaplains took a journey to Cambridge to do the like for Hammond.

The Duke of Bedford was drawn in by some ladies to send about to his tenants and militia

officers, that they should not fail to poll for Sir John ; on the other side, the Duke of Somerset recommended Sir Harry only.

I believe your Grace has the lists sent you of the new choice, which contains many of the old members, and some of the hottest, only Hammond and Davenant happen to be dropped.

I intend to wait on the King to-morrow, and then I will know his pleasure about the Counsellor at Orange.

I have run over the projector's long paper : I don't find he has made the proof of his experiment, but expects to be sent for that he may do it here. He makes a canting description, which I understand nothing of. I intend to put it into my Lord President's hands, that he may try if he can decypher it.

I have a letter to-day from my Lord Rochester of the 20th, who had then received the account of the Parliament being dissolved. He delivers it as his opinion, that there may be great hazard in it, and wishes he may have leave to return into England, where he has a great business of his own. Whether he means to quit the employment or not, I don't well understand.

I have sent your letter to my Lord Sunderland, who makes no show of leaving his retirement.

MR. VERNON TO GEORGE STEPNEY.*

Whitehall, January 6, 1702.†

SIR,—I believe you did not expect to receive an answer from me to some letters you lately wrote to Sir Charles Hedges, but upon those seals being given to my Lord Manchester, his Majesty has appointed me to attend the business of the northern province. I assure you the command is not grievous; and I have a particular satisfaction in the opportunity of corresponding with you. Your letters I have to acknowledge are of the 22nd, 24th, 28th, and 31st of December, which have been laid before his Majesty. I have nothing in command to write to you upon them. I can only add, that I hope we shall go on, on both sides, to provide what the present conjuncture requires. I have this day delivered into the House of Commons, the treaties that were negotiated by my Lord Marlborough at the Hague, together with that with Denmark. It may be expected that the House will take them into consider-

* Resident Minister at Vienna.

† This letter, and several that follow to Stepney, are misdated in the copy before me; the year in which they were written was as I have given it above, 1702; which is proved by the date of the dismissal of Sir Charles Hedges, on the 4th January, 1702.

ation within a very few days, and that, I hope, will end in settling our quota of land forces.

As for other Parliament news, I refer you to what you will receive from the office; and I have only further to assure you, that I am, with great truth,

Your most faithful humble servant,

JAMES VERNON.

Monsieur Neschurtz is newly arrived from Poland; he was with me this morning, to desire he may have an audience with the King.

MR. VERNON TO GEORGE STEPNEY.

Whitehall, January 9, 1702.

SIR,—I have received this day your letter of the 4th inst., and hope to have an opportunity to lay it before his Majesty to-morrow, at his return from Hampton Court. In the meantime, I send you an account (you will be pleased with) of what is past to-day in the House of Commons. It being the same I have written to Mr. Stanhope, you will allow me that ease, as to send it you in another

hand. I hope the vigour the Parliament has shewn will add some more weight to your arguments, as well for keeping * * * * at a distance, as for bringing the King of the Romans, to head an army on the Rhine. Such an example will not only animate the Germans, but the good influence of it will reach even hither.

I am, Sir,

Your most faithful humble Servant,

JAMES VERNON.

MR. VERNON TO GEORGE STEPNEY.

Whitehall, 13th January, 1702.

SIR,—I have none of your letters since those of the 4th instant, which I acknowledged last post. Upon their being laid before his Majesty, I was directed to acquaint you, that his Majesty cannot help being in pain about the expedition designed for Naples, apprehending that the Emperor's forces may be so divided and weakened by it, as not to be able to make a sufficient resistance against the troops that the French are every day pouring into Italy; which his Majesty desires may

be well considered, before any such attempt be made.

His Majesty thinks this may be the proper time for his sending some person to Ratisbonne, and you having formerly recommended Mr. Whitworth for this employment, his Majesty does not doubt his fitness for it; and therefore, he would have you dispatch him thither, as soon as you may think it may be of use. I shall prepare such credentials as have been usual in that place; and you will let me know under whose cover they may be directed, for his safe receiving them at Ratisbonne. I suppose an allowance of forty shillings per diem will be a competent encouragement for him at present, and when I hear from you, a Privy Seal may be procured for it. I believe you must take the care of furnishing him with what is necessary for his journey, and you will let me know how you would have it reimbursed.

I must tell you of another young minister the King is sending abroad, and that is, my son; whom upon the news of Mr. Grey's death, his Majesty has appointed to succeed him in the Court of Denmark, with the character of Envoy Extraordinary. I hope he will deserve that title, when he is instructed by your correspondence how to manage such an em-

ployment, and to be of some use to his country. I don't yet know what we are to do about the ceremonial not long since introduced to that Court: I should be glad to know your thoughts, whether any expedient can be found that may satisfy all parties.

Monsieur Neschurtz, the Polish minister, is to meet my Lord Marlborough and me to-morrow. I suppose Count Wratislau intends to come with him.

You will see, by this day's votes, that in answer to the addresses of the House of Commons; the King has promised care shall be taken that it be inserted in our alliance, not to consent to a peace with France till reparation be made for their presuming to set a King over us. Monsieur Wratislau expects we should deliver him, in form, an article drawn up to that effect, that he may send it to Vienna to procure an approbation of it: he seems to insinuate as if it would require his giving it a good turn, to make it passable, so as not to check their managements with the Court of Rome. What those are I don't know; but I think the Court of Vienna should be very well pleased that the Parliament have furnished so solid a foundation for the nation's engaging in this quarrel; and I am per-

suaded you will find little difficulty in getting it approved.

I am, Sir,

Your most faithful humble Servant,

JAMES VERNON.

MR. VERNON TO GEORGE STEPNEY.

Whitehall, January 20, 1702.

SIR,—Your letters of the 11th and 14th inst. arrived yesterday, and have been laid before his Majesty. I have only in command to acquaint you, that his Majesty does what he can to press the House of Lunenberg to conclude their treaty with Denmark; and I write this night to Mr. Cresset, that he should be earnest in it. You know it —* at their great caution, not to do any thing that may disgust the Swedes, which they apprehend any guarantee beyond Holstein would do.

The Polish minister here, I believe, will have an answer within two or three days, that we can't go above 6,000 men between us and the Dutch. Monsieur Wratislau talks as if it had been agreed at

* Something wanting.

Vienna we should take 12,000. You will judge whether that can be complied with, when we want only 10,000 foreigners of our full quota, and must keep a reserve for 6,000 besides. What you write of the French regiments being drawn from Flanders to send to Italy, his Majesty thinks they are not rightly informed in. Their numbers do not diminish on this side.

The rupture that is so much pressed for cannot long be delayed. I should be glad to see every thing in readiness for it.

I am, Sir,

Your most faithful humble Servant,

JAMES VERNON.

MR. VERNON TO GEORGE STEPNEY.

Whitehall, January 23, 1702.

I have none of yours to acknowledge, the Dutch post not being yet arrived. However, I must not omit acquainting you that my Lord Marlborough met Monsieur Neschurtz here this evening, and Count Wratislau being present, he acquainted him that the King was very desirous to preserve the King of Poland's friendship; and in order to it, his

proposal should be complied with, as far as our circumstances would admit; but we having only 10,000 men to be provided, viz.,—about 800 horse, and 9,200 foot, and being in treaty with Sweden for 6,000 men, we could take but 4,000 of the King of Poland's troops, but were willing that 400 of them should be horse, and 3,600 foot. And his Majesty undertook the States would take the same number, though we were restrained to the number of 8,000 between us; yet that it might be a less disappointment to the King of Poland, his Majesty and the States were content to pay a larger proportion of the subsidy than that number required, whereas it was proposed that the subsidy for 16,000 men should have been 300,000 crowns, they would still pay 250,000 crowns for half that number; and if they have occasion for more of his troops the next year, or at any other time, they should be glad to entertain them; but at present, this was the utmost they could go to.

Monsieur Neschurtz argued that this would be a great inconvenience to his master, who expected to have 16,000 men taken off his hands, as was promised him by the Emperor; and in confidence thereof, he had given out commissions for raising 8,000 men more, which were to remain in Saxony,

and this offer of subsidy would not go far in the charge he should be at in keeping so many men at home. Count Wratislau endeavoured to satisfy him that they, receiving 8,000 florins, by way of subsidy from the Emperor, the King, and the States, would find their burthen easy. He, in answer, said it would be easier if the Emperor took another 8,000. However, he undertook to send his master an account of the offer, and thought he should have an answer in five or six weeks. He then spoke about the command of those troops, whether his master might not be at the head of them if he thought fit? that was declared an improper thing, and he was told that, according to the agreement made with other princes for their troops, a lieutenant-general would be allowed to command these 8,000 Saxons of the King of Poland's nomination, and two major-generals, if he would have so many.

This is the substance of what passed, but I must not omit mentioning that Monsieur Neschurtz said, if so few troops were taken, his master would be for keeping a neutrality in this cause, and afterwards explained his meaning, that his master would be at liberty to hearken to any proposal from France for the like number of men. This, you may imagine,

was received with a smile, and he was told more seriously, that upon the conclusion of this matter, it was expected his master would come into the Grand Alliance.

We can't guess here what will be the issue of this negociation; you may be better able to do it, in judging how far the King of Poland is influenced by the Court at Vienna; but if they have not a way to fix this prince, we shall fall short of our number, and I fear worse consequences will attend it.

You will see by the resolutions of the Committee this day, that they have agreed the particulars relating to the English troops that are to serve abroad, by which means, I hope, they will be soon in readiness. Perhaps, next committee day, consideration will be had of adding 5,000 men to go on board the fleet. There is a talk as if the Duke of Ormond should command any descent that may be intended; people here are inclined to hope well of any business he shall undertake.

I am, Sir,

Your most faithful humble Servant.

JAMES VERNON.

MR. VERNON TO GEORGE STEPNEY.

Whitehall, Feb. 6, 1701-2.

I have none of your letters to acknowledge, the Dutch post not being yet arrived. My occasion of writing now is only to acquaint you, that the Earl of Albermarle is gone this day for Holland, from whence he will have occasion to correspond with you; and his Majesty commands me to signify his pleasure to you, that you should pursue such directions as he shall intimate to you from time to time for his Majesty's service, and the carrying on the common interest.

The votes of yesterday will inform you of his Majesty's answer to the address, about the allies sending a proportionate quota to the land forces that his Majesty shall put on board his fleet.

This day the committee went through most of the demands made on account of the Danish treaty; they have allowed all the articles that were expressly grounded on the said treaty, such as the arrears due upon the treaty of 1696, the subsidy levy money, and established pay stipulated by the present treaty; but other articles were disallowed, as not being strictly comprehended within that treaty.

It remains yet to consider what is demanded by virtue of the late convention with Sweden, which I

suppose will be despatched on Monday, and after that we may go into the Committee of Ways and Means.

I am, Sir,

Your most faithful humble Servant,

JAMES VERNON.

MR. VERNON TO GEORGE STEPNEY.

Whitehall, Feb. 10, 1701-2.

I have received your letters of the 28th of January, and the 4th and 5th inst., which have been laid before his Majesty ; but I have not yet had a proper opportunity to move his Majesty about considering your expence. You may be assured, my endeavours shall not be wanting to make you easy in that post.

I have not received the contre project you mention about the Turkish trade. It is not long since I heard some of the Levant Company say that they had received a scheme how their trade might be driven over land into Turkey, which they applauded as a very sensible account. But I did not perceive they had any thing to move upon it, and I suppose they will not till they find the way obstructed by sea. It being their business, I think one must wait till they have any thing to propose.

You will take your own method in what volume you will write; the larger and the lesser letters can't but be always very acceptable.

I suppose the Naples expedition is diverted by the design upon Cremona, which we have had an account of, as well by the way of Holland, as from Paris. The attempt is highly extolled here: we have only to wish the Prince of Vandemont had come time enough.

I have put into my Lord Marlborough's hands the draught of an article, to be inserted in the convention, about the quotas, in relation to the Prince of Wales. I suppose he has communicated it to Count Wratislaw, and he will send it to Vienna, for directions upon it. I am glad to hear that there will be no difficulty in passing it, and indeed we can't make a convention without it. I know not what is to be proposed about religion in the West Indies, but I think that requires no immediate haste: I fancy we shall be sufficiently employed this next summer with our concerns at home.

You will see, by the accounts sent you, that we have done with the Committee of Supplies. We go to-morrow into the Committee of Ways and Means, and are to find out how near four millions sterling may be raised, which this year's charge will amount to.

We have settled our Abjuration Bill; and I think it is made more effectual than it seemed to be at first intended. My son, I believe, will embark on Friday next, and will begin his correspondence with you when he arrives in Holland.

I am, Sir,

Your most faithful humble Servant,

JAMES VERNON.

MR. VERNON TO GEORGE STEPNEY.

Whitehall, February, 13, 1701-2.

The Dutch post that arrived with the letters of Friday last, brought none of yours, and there is a mail due since.

Comte Wratislaw* begins now to produce his reasons for altering the secret article of our treaty with the Emperor, which he calls a reasonable explanation of it, and thinks it ought to go hand in hand with the article we expect in relation to the pretended Prince of Wales. They repent they have allowed

* The reader will remark that the orthography of the proper names is never accurately preserved in these letters, but the editor has not thought fit to change the spelling.

us to keep any place we shall seize in the Spanish West Indies, and would have it only understood in terrorem to oblige those people to submit to the Emperor, and we and the Dutch shall be recompensed with a free liberty of trade into all those parts. If that could be once well established, I don't know but it may be much more advantageous to us than any thing got by rapine or buccaneering ; but perhaps it may be very requisite to use force, in order to bring people to the temper you would have them in. In that case, it would not be very advisable to withdraw the encouragements already agreed on, and we shall be less able to baulk the Parliament here, than they can the Pope. Many here seem more pleased with that article than any of the rest, and are like therefore to take great exceptions at the laying it aside, till they can be convinced that the nation will reap a greater benefit another way, which I fear will not be done so well by argument as by experience.

We hear lately of an extraordinary piece of news from the West Indies, and wish it may prove true. It is said that Montezuma, Viceroy of Mexico, would not suffer their plate to come into the hands of the French, and the orders from Spain would not

be obeyed, while they were looked upon to be under the influence of France.

If this be so we hope it will have other good consequences, and naturally engage those people to seek a protection elsewhere, and open a trade for their being supplied with what they want in another manner than they have been. This ought to prevent using any hostilities against them, and may properly require new measures, as their inclinations shall appear. If, in the meantime, we are to be denied the article the House of Commons have proposed, they will not think themselves very kindly dealt with.*

We have made a great progress these two last days in the Committee of Ways and Means, which I hope will resolve how the remainder of what they want shall be raised, at their next meeting on Monday.

I understand it is intended that the Emperor shall be desired to treat solely with the King of Poland for a greater proportion of his Saxon troops, since the Swedes are not like to suffer their troops to act

* It is curious to see the first idea of the separation of the American Colonies of European states from the mother countries started by an English Secretary of State.

in conjunction with them ; and in that case we should take as many of the Imperial troops in lieu of them. But this I desire you will keep to yourself, only if you hear it mentioned you may be the better prepared to support it.

I am, Sir,

Your most faithful humble Servant,

JAMES VERNON.

MR. VERNON TO GEORGE STEPNEY, ESQ.

Whitehall, February 17, 1701-2.

I have received your letters of the 8th and 10th inst., which have been laid before his Majesty, who very much desires that the Emperor may maintain his superiority in Italy. Yet he can't but insist that the troops promised for the Rhine should be made good, and directs that you continue your instances in that behalf.

I suppose the Swedes will have every day less reason to take any umbrage at our treating with the King of Poland for troops.

Monsieur Nischurtz, came to me on Saturday, to tell me that his master was determined not to treat for less than 12,000 men, between us and the

States ; and therefore, if we stuck to our proposal of 8,000, there was an end of his negotiation, and he had nothing more to do here. I asked him whether he had received an answer from his master since the proposition was made him ; he said he had not, nor could he receive it this month. But this proposal being the same he had heard of in Holland, he had writ it from thence to his master, who had thereupon signified to him that he should proceed in no treaty for so small a number. I shewed him wherein the proposal made here differed from any he could have received in Holland, since my Lord Marlborough was the first that acquainted him that his Majesty would increase the subsidy beyond the number of 8,000 ; and he having undertaken to know his master's pleasure upon it, it was a little surprising to see him in such haste, as not to expect an answer, which must look as if they had disposed of their troops some other way. He talks so much of his orders, that I don't know whether he intends to make any stay here or not.

I send you the article about the Prince of Wales, which I delivered in form last night to Count Wratislau, that he may procure the Emperor's directions for his agreeing to it in the convention about the quotas. He said there was but one thing he

observed in it, which he wished might be otherwise expressed, and that was the *pretended* Prince of Wales. He asked whether it might not be changed to vulgo dictum. That, I told him, was a style utterly unknown here, and we can't vary from the language of our country in this case: he said no more of it, and I hope nobody else will.

I told him, at the same time, that upon Monsieur Coetlogon's returning empty from the West Indies, and the reports we have that the Spanish governors had refused to send home the flota under French convoy, his Majesty had thoughts of sending instructions to Vice-Admiral Benbow, and to the Governor of Jamaica, that they should endeavour to inform themselves of the inclinations of the people in the West Indies. If they were disposed to cast off any dependence on the house of Bourbon, and could be induced to submit themselves to the Austrian family, that they should give all encouragement to it, and be ready to assist them for putting it in execution.

I was directed by his Majesty to know of Count Wratislau, whether he had any orders in such a case, or what he could contribute to the forwarding such a design. He said it was a matter unforeseen, and therefore he had no instructions about it, but he would despatch a courier on purpose to Vienna, and

did not doubt but they would send him back with proper orders, and that the offer would be very acceptable to the Emperor, and he should make great use of it at Rome, and draw from thence very good assistances towards making it effectual.

He conceives already great hopes of it, and it may be a very probable way to turn Spain on their side. I think it is not to be doubted but they will be glad to keep together.

I send you the copy of a letter by which his Majesty recommends Prince Maurice d'Auvergne to the Emperor. The original will be brought by himself, his Majesty being related to that family, would have you as assisting to this Prince as you can. I don't know what he particularly aims at, and his Majesty did not think it necessary to give him more than a general but earnest recommendation.

When the King signed this letter, he repeated again his directions that you should be very pressing to have the Imperial troops despatched to the Rhine, lest otherwise, affairs may go ill on that side.

I am, Sir,

Your most faithful humble Servant,

JAMES VERNON.

MR. VERNON TO GEORGE STEPNEY, ESQ.

Whitehall, Feb. 21, 1701-2.

I have no letters of yours to acknowledge, the Dutch mail not being yet arrived. I can only, therefore, acquaint you that your two letters which came last post, have been laid before his Majesty. I have only the same direction to send you again, to take care that the Imperial troops be not wanting on the Rhine.

Monsieur Nischurtz, I hear, has been to enquire for me, but we have no luck at meeting, and I have nothing now to say to him. If any body can engage that King, it must be the Emperor, and his troops may be most useful in that service. They will a little too much interfere with the design we have of gaining Sweden, who may prove an ally more to be depended upon.

The King goes on very well with his cure; he feels to-day a goutish pain in his knee, which the doctors do not dislike.

I can say nothing to you in particular, how our fleet will be employed; the present business is to get it ready, and then it will soon be ordered to act where there is most occasion. I am, Sir,

Your most faithful humble Servant,

JAMES VERNON.

MR. VERNON TO GEORGE STEPNEY, ESQ.

Whitehall, February 24, 1701-2.

I received this day your letters of the 15th and 18th inst. I hope to have an opportunity of laying them before his Majesty to-morrow. In the meantime, I am sorry I must acquaint you with the ill accident that befell his Majesty on Saturday last at Hampton Court, when he fell from his horse that stumbled at a mole-hill, and the fall has caused a fracture at the end of the collar-bone, towards the end of the right shoulder. There was a surgeon at hand, and his Majesty being dressed, was brought to town that night. His Majesty has continued since without any fever, or other ill symptoms, so that I hope he will be quit for a few days confinement.

I can have no directions to send you till I have waited on his Majesty. I shall only, therefore, tell you a passage between Count Wratislau and myself. Seeing him this morning, I took notice to him that it had been lately insinuated in the House of Commons as if we should be disappointed in our expectations of that Court's consenting to the article about the pretended Prince of Wales. I asked him

whether he had held any discourse of that nature ; he answered he had not, and said I might boldly aver the Emperor would make no difficulty in it. But it dropt from him soon after, that the article might have met with some obstruction, if we had not been so frank (as we appeared) in the business of the West Indies. I don't know well what to judge of that saying, whether he had not been raising difficulties before about the article, or whether it were to bring us to a compliance with the alteration he aims at in the sixth article of the new treaty. I told him he need not doubt of our improving all opportunities to get the house of Austria acknowledged in the West Indies ; and the interest we had in it would vouch for our security more than any article could which would contribute nothing to the accomplishing it ; but if it succeeded not, might raise a great clamour here by discouraging the making of attempts by force.

I think he does not now intend to insist upon any public article that shall contradict the former, but he would set up I know not what negotiation with commissioners to be appointed him for that purpose. I should think that would be time enough when we are a little better apprized of the dispositions in the Spanish West Indies. If they incline to submit to

the Emperor, we shall be sure to help it on ; if they have no such intention, our people will take it ill to be delivered from any enterprise upon them, and reaping the whole benefit of it, as they must be at all the expence. For removing, therefore, all doubts and delays, I hope you will press the dispatching directions to Count Wratislau, that he pass the article out of hand, and that it be not clogged with matters of another nature, or otherwise it would cast a great damp upon our zeal in this cause.

I find the Count begins to busy himself in behalf of the papists here, and receives memorials from them, wherein they reclaim his protection. He gave me one of them, from some obscure people in Dorsetshire, who complain of their being prosecuted upon some of the penal laws, and would at first have demanded a *nolle prosequi* for them. I advised him to take care how he put difficulties upon the King, in expecting he should stop the course of the law. Then he only proposed that the judges who are going that circuit may be spoke to not to prosecute these cases with rigour. I shall inquire into the matter, and do what becomes me, but I am sorry to find the Count under the influence you have lately mentioned, which may embarrass

us, with little advantage to the common cause. I don't write this that you should take any notice of it to the ministers there, but in case any thing be mentioned to you, you would divert them from these solicitations, which, sooner or later, will produce but ill effects here. I am, Sir,

Your most faithful humble Servant,

JAMES VERNON.

MR. VERNON TO GEORGE STEPNEY, ESQ.

Whitehall, March 3, 1701-2.

We want two Dutch mails, so that I have none of your letters to acknowledge. I can only, therefore, acquaint you that his Majesty is very near well of his hurt, but he has a swelling still in his hand and knee. I hope he will be abroad some time next week, and perhaps come to the House of Lords to pass the Abjuration Bill.

I must not omit putting you in mind of procuring positive directions to be sent to Count Wratislau, that the article about the pretended Prince of Wales be made part of our treaty. It is very necessary it should be despatched before the Parliament rises.

I told you in my last of Count Wratislau's concerning himself in solicitations for Roman Catholics. He has since sent me the case in a petition of the party to the King. It is from two sisters of Mr. Keightley, who live in Dorsetshire; one is the widow Long, and the other unmarried. I understand they are both furiously bigotted, and on that account their neighbours have no good will towards them. There is now a prosecution carried on against them by a widow lady, who was married to Mrs. Long's nephew. She had been a Roman Catholic, as her husband was, but being turned Protestant, she is very desirous to breed her children up Protestants, which Mrs. Long opposes, and has the power of doing it by being appointed guardian to the children. These feuds have occasioned her being sued upon the statute of forfeiting 20*l.* per mensem for not coming to church. It would be very clamorous if any body should go about to suspend the laws in favour of people that appear so obstinate. I have spoke to a Member of Parliament, who is their neighbour, and knows both parties, that he would interpose and reconcile their differences. If the mother were not deprived of her children, the old ladies might live unmolested; but they keep a busy priest in their house, who calls in

foreign aid. It is much fitter that we should send him away, and perhaps that will be the end of it.

I am, Sir,

Your most faithful humble Servant,

JAMES VERNON.

MR. VERNON TO GEORGE STEPNEY, ESQ.

Whitehall, March 6, 1701-2.

It is with great concern I acquaint you that his Majesty has had two or three fits of an ague, which have very much weakened him. He had yesterday a looseness, after having been bound two or three days, but it stopped again, and his Majesty rested pretty well last night. He had no return of his ague to-day, but his stomach being out of order, he has brought up a great deal of phlegm and choler by vomiting. I came from Kensington this evening, after his Majesty was put to bed; the physicians told me he was gone to sleep. If it pleases God that he rests well to-night, I hope the danger will be over. We want three mails from Holland.

I am, Sir,

Your most faithful humble Servant,

JAMES VERNON.

MR. VERNON TO GEORGE STEPNEY, ESQ.

Whitehall, March 8, 1701-2.

I sent you on Friday last the melancholy account of our master's illness, and now I must tell you the most afflicting news, that we are for ever deprived of him. It pleased God to take him to himself about eight this morning, but his memory ought ever to be precious among us. His fit returned upon him yesterday, and left him very weak. It was thought fit to give him Jesuit's powder, but his strength was so far sunk, that all remedies were too late.

The Council met immediately upon this sad occurrence, and settled the orders for proclaiming the Queen this afternoon; then they attended her Majesty, and were sworn again of the Privy Council, and her Majesty made the following declaration to them, which is since printed and enclosed.

After this, his Majesty's death was notified to both Houses of Parliament then sitting. The resolutions the Commons came to upon this occasion, you will see in the enclosed votes, and I ought not to omit telling you, that as the House shewed great concern for the loss of his Majesty, so they were

very firm in their resolutions of supporting the alliances that are or shall be made against France. The Lords have also resolved upon an address to the like effect.

Her Majesty has been proclaimed this afternoon, both Houses attending the ceremony.

I am to acknowledge the receipt of your letters of the 22nd and 25th of February, and 1st instant, which arrived on Saturday, but I can make no particular answer to them, since they have not yet been laid before her Majesty.

I hope to send you, by Tuesday's post, the letters in form, notifying his Majesty's death; and that I shall send you her Majesty's directions at the same time for your going into close mourning.

I am, Sir,

Your most faithful humble Servant,

JAMES VERNON.

MR. VERNON TO GEORGE STEPNEY, ESQ.

Whitehall, March 10, 1701-2.

I have received your letter of the 4th inst., but must defer making any answer to particulars till our thoughts are a little more composed to business.

I was in hopes to have sent you by this post the letters notifying the King's death, and her Majesty's accession to the throne, but I find it impossible to despatch them sooner than for the next post. I shall endeavour to have your new credentials ready to be sent at the same time, and in the meanwhile, her Majesty is pleased to direct that you provide to put yourself and servants into mourning in the most solemn manner.

I don't doubt that the proceedings of Parliament will give great satisfaction abroad, as they do here. The addresses of the Lords and Commons here inclosed will best express the sense of the nation, and there is great reason to believe that we shall always act conformably thereto.

The Lord Mayor and Aldermen waited on her Majesty this evening with a very loyal address.

To-morrow her Majesty goes to the House of Lords, and will speak to both Houses.

I am, Sir,

Your most faithful humble Servant,

JAMES VERNON.

MR. VERNON TO GEORGE STEPNEY, ESQ.

Whitehall, March 13, 1701-2.

Her Majesty commands me to acquaint you that she has thought fit, in this great conjuncture, to despatch the Earl of Marlborough over to Holland, with the character of her Majesty's Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, to give the States General assurances of her stedfast resolution to adhere to all the treaties of alliance that have been entered into, and to pursue all the measures that have been concerted between his Majesty, the Emperor, and the States, for carrying on the common cause. And on this occasion his Excellency is instructed to communicate to you and the rest of her Majesty's Ministers abroad, all such matters as he shall judge necessary for her Majesty's service, and the good of the confederates, and to send you such directions thereupon as the exigency of affairs shall require, which her Majesty would have you punctually pursue, and not fail to keep a constant correspondence with his Excellency during his stay in Holland.

I now send you new credentials from her Majesty, with the usual letters, notifying her accession to

the throne: you best know in what manner they are to be delivered.

I received this day your letters of the 8th of March, and have already communicated them to a committee of the Lords of the Council, which method will be taken hereafter, in order to make a report to her Majesty. I have not seen my Lord Marlborough since, but I believe he has been with my Lord Albermarle, where he has met with the account I should have shewn him, and you may expect the best answers will be returned upon his Lordship's arrival at the Hague. He has all his despatches, and if the wind comes westerly, he designs to embark to-morrow.

Her Majesty has made him Captain General of all her land forces, as well abroad as here, and this evening he and the Duke of Bedford have had the honour of the Garter conferred upon them.

I met Mr. Ireton to-day, who tells me a present of six fine horses for the King of the Romans was sent over near a fortnight ago. I wish we knew where to find a young nobleman fit to make the campaign with him. I question now whether Count Frieze will be appointed for that service.

I am, Sir, Your most faithful humble Servant,

JAMES VERNON.

MR. VERNON TO GEORGE STEPNEY, ESQ.

Whitehall, March 17, 1701-2.

I send you credentials for the Empress and the King of the Romans. I don't know whether they are very necessary after your having been so long there ; but it being that you had such when you went first to Vienna, we would leave nothing omitted that might be of use to you.

I am to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 11th inst., which arrived yesterday. I send a copy of it this night to my Lord Marlborough, that he may see there is something like a chicane arising about our article, which can't be refused us without the greatest unkindness.

I don't doubt but you received by the following post of the 17th of February the article in form as you expected it. It was long before put into my Lord Marlborough's hands in Latin and English. I suppose he had communicated it to Count Wratislau, but I know not why he turned it into French. I hope all difficulties about it are over. My Lord Marlborough expected to receive advice at the Hague that it was complied with. Count Wratislau and he have been always upon so good terms

that I can't but think he has pressed the despatch of it in good earnest. He knows of what consequence the refusal or even the delay would be here, and we have not been backward on our side in doing whatever might be grateful to the Emperor.

I take it for granted Count Wratislau has spoke to my Lord Marlborough about the Mecklenburg affair, and that there it dropt.

I have heard the Count, some time since, insinuating that the Elector of Mentz ought to be supported from hence. If he has new orders about it, he knows where to make the next effectual application.

I am, Sir,

Your most faithful humble Servant,

JAMES VERNON.

MR. VERNON TO GEORGE STEPNEY, ESQ.

Whitehall, March 20, 1701-2.

I must not omit acknowledging your letter of the 15th inst., which I have just now received. I hope your next will tell us the article is allowed of without any alteration.

I am afraid there is little to be expected from the

King of Prussia about his accommodating the matter of the 6,000 Saxons; you will hear from Holland how intent he is upon his succession to the Principality of Orange, and perhaps every thing else will be sacrificed to it. I believe you guess right that the Saxons would be best employed at home.

I am, Sir,

Your most faithful humble Servant,

JAMES VERNON.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

March 23, 1702.

I beg your Grace's pardon that I am so long in acknowledging the honour of your Grace's letter of the 6th of January.

I have been, and am, under so much disturbance with the violence I expect from the prize accounts, that I can think of nothing else.

This Parliament has brought it to press more personally upon me, by enacting that every commissioner shall be accountable for all ships taken

during the time that he was in commission, and shall likewise be assistant in making up the accounts. This being added to the former law, I conclude, is on purpose to involve one in all the trouble that severe men will inflict; and to give a handle to it, it has unluckily fallen out that Paschal, being no longer able to struggle with his debts, has withdrawn himself, and as he writes me word, is retired into Holland, without any thoughts of ever coming back. While the commission lasted, he was the chief manager in it, and since, he has the most concerned himself in making up the account; his associate, Mr. Parkhurst, having no great talent that way, at least now Paschal is fled; and he that was the constituted accountant is dead.

I don't know whether there be any one remaining that can make a pertinent answer to any difficulties that may arise in those accounts; this being the case, your Grace won't wonder at one's uneasiness, which must always be most sensible when one can't see any probable means of getting out of it.

I see nothing but patience and resignation to trust to, which are remedies not to entertain others withal. I shall only, therefore, wish your Grace all happiness and a safe return home, when you think this a country fit to be lived in.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

March 24, 1702.

I have the honour of your Grace's letters of the 14th and 28th of January and the 11th of February to acknowledge, which arrived all together, and some days after his Majesty had his fall, so that I could only acquaint him where you was, and he was glad to hear you was in health.

I have had little heart to write letters since, and indeed I was not much in temper for it before. I desired Mr. Yard to acquaint your Grace with the uneasiness I have had this whole session, expecting to be fallen upon in the House of Commons, either on account of the prize-office, or for having appeared against Mr. Harley's being Speaker in the King's name ; some that were spoke to being such true party-men, though the King's servants, that they were ready to make a sacrifice of their own reputations, if the House had been as much disposed to violence as they were the last year. One is delivered out of those apprehensions by a much more unfortunate event, the death of the King,* which happening while one was in such extreme ill terms with

* 8th of March, 1702.

an unforgiving party, that is now predominant, I ought not to flatter myself with the expectations of continuing in this station.

I hold the Seals at present, and was sworn as others were of the Council. I am not yet sensible of any coldness, either in my Lord Marlborough or my Lord Godolphin, and I hear it more spoken of that my Lord Manchester* is to be dismissed than myself, and much is said of the moderation the two fore-mentioned Lords will maintain. I believe it their interest and inclination to do so; but when I consider whom they are linked with, I can't think them at liberty to act but as others will allow them; and what can one judge favourably, when it is industriously spread among the party that it was a formed design of the Whigs to put the Queen by her right, and that there was a project of that nature found among the King's papers; and the Tories give it out that never men had such a deliverance as theirs was, by the King's death,—that their ruin was resolved, and would have been put in execution within a month. Though I am satisfied every tittle of this is a pure invention, yet I think the authors will make a terrible use of it, and I pray God to protect the innocent, and to keep us from confusion. I can be

* He had been appointed Secretary of State in room of Hedges, shortly before this period.

well contented to see them clothed with my spoils ; and though I have very little to retire to, it will be a great satisfaction to go off without any just reproach.

I have just now received your Grace's letter of the 4th instant. The letters you mention of the 10th and 17th of December never came to my hands, and that matter of Boswell's is now over. I am glad to hear your Grace is so well in health : if you please to come over in May, you may bear your part at a coronation. I hope you have had a kind invitation from our ministry ; if you would join with them, it would lay an obligation upon them and others.

My Lord Sunderland writes me word he will come to town within a fortnight, and intends to stay till after the coronation. I wish he were here sooner. I don't know but he might be very useful in judging what the new settlement ought to be. At least, I shall hope to hear from him what I have to expect, that one may not be kept long in uncertainties.

MR. VERNON TO GEORGE STEPNEY, ESQ.

Whitehall, March 24, 1702.

I have received your letter of the 18th, and have read it to her Majesty at the Cabinet Council, which began to sit yesterday for the first time. I have heard nothing of Monsieur Nischurtz, so that he has not yet received the orders you mention, or he keeps them for my Lord Marlborough's return. I don't know whether this compliance will be of any great use to us, since it seems to be more desirable here to have troops from Sweden, if they would part with them.

I am sorry to find they are contriving expedients, at Vienna, to evade our article ; what is offered at can never be admitted here. If they think this was more than a pretended Prince of Wales, they have no reason to call it an indignity in the French to own him as King : which naturally follows upon the validity of his first title, as you have well observed to them. My Lord Marlborough takes notice, in his letter from the Hague, that he found Monsieur Goes set upon mangling the article ; but my Lord told him plainly that the article could not be altered, and he thought they could not do the

Emperor a greater disservice than leaving the article unfinished. He desired me, likewise, to press the same thing to Count Wratislau; which I have done.

He seems pretty well convinced of the necessity of passing the article, and does not approve of Count Goes's opposition. He said he had no orders yet about it, but daily expected his courier. He talks as if he were resolved to sign the article, and trust to its being approved of at Vienna. I hope he does not mean that we are to have a new chicane about the ratification; I believe he will do his part as soon as my Lord Marlborough returns. If it prove otherwise, it can't but have ill consequences.

I am, Sir,

Your most faithful humble Servant,

JAMES VERNON.

MR. VERNON TO GEORGE STEPNEY, ESQ.

Whitehall, March 27, 1702.

I send you, by her Majesty's command, a request of Monsieur Schutz in the name of his masters, that you should be assisting to their solicitations at Vienna, for bringing the business of the ninth

Electorate to perfection; in which her Majesty would have you serve them, pursuant to the orders you received from the late King. Those having been sent you at several times, and from several places, I desire you will let me know the substance of them.

The high and contrary winds detain my Lord Marlborough and the letters on the other side, so that I have none of yours to acknowledge; and I have only to tell you, that we are doing all that is possible to hasten out our fleet, and to get the regiments ready that are to be employed at sea.

I believe the interment of our master will be about the middle of April, and her Majesty's coronation towards the end of it.

I am, Sir,

Your most faithful humble Servant,

JAMES VERNON.

MR. VERNON TO GEORGE STEPNEY, ESQ.

Whitehall, March 31, 1702.

I have received your letters of the 22nd, 23rd, and 24th inst., N.S. As to the first of them, which mentions a Bill of Extraordinaries that will be

brought me, you know I am not in the same capacity to answer for the success of it. My advice in this case should be, that you would find out some way either to engage my Lord Marlborough, or my Lord Godolphin; and then I hope your particular circumstances would be considered. If I could undertake it, it should neither be delayed nor remitted to any other.

I understand, from my Lord Marlborough, that Count Goes has received orders about our article; and no difficulties remain as to the signing it, only it must go hand in hand with the declaration of war.

I should have sent you the form of it sooner, but that it lay in my Lord Marlborough's hands to consider of it; and I believed Count Wratislau as ready to sign it as we could be, they having so much interest to see us thoroughly engaged in the war. But as soon as ever I found it required that I should give Count Wratislau the article in form, I sent you a copy of it the same day. I am glad to find the priesthood more in the right in this particular than the ministry. I wish, therefore, the things they had to ask of us were not so impracticable. The Irish Catholics have engaged the Count to solicit against a clause in a bill that is depending in Parlia-

ment, wherein it is provided that the forfeited estates restored shall be tenanted by Protestants, which is so necessary, that in many parts of Ireland they could not have juries without it; and when a particular grace is shown them, they should not repine that it is done with some regard to the public good. I don't satisfy the Count when I tell him, there is no expectation the House of Commons should recall such a resolution. He tells me we solicit in behalf of Protestants in Hungary and Transylvania; and my answer is, that we observe with trouble that no more notice is taken of it than stands with their own convenience; and perhaps even that is not allowed to be considered in these cases, where zeal bears down all secular advantages.

I would move the Archbishop about recommending a chaplain to you, if it be your intention to be at the charge of having one. I know none but Mr. Robinson that has such an allowance, and that was because he had not the character of envoy.

There is a prospect now that the Rhine is like to be better provided for than Italy: God grant we hear of no misfortune there.

The King of Poland's express, who brings his consent to the proposal about 8,000 men, stops at the Hague till my Lord Marlborough comes over.

I hear he agrees only upon condition to have 600,000 crowns subsidy, which is the double of what was offered.

Monsieur Nischurtz was with me this morning, to complain that he had been misrepresented, or not rightly understood; and I had my share in the charge, as having said he had negotiated with a menacing air. The Ambassador of Prussia was quoted as an author; and something he said had been writ to Vienna. I told him, for my own part, if ever I had mentioned him, it was only repeating his own words, and from those I supposed he would never apprehend any prejudice.

In the conclusion, he seemed to desire something of me, in order to give people a better opinion of him, which I own I did not well understand; nor do I know what way to go about it. I put him in mind of his telling me that he had nothing to do here, if more than 8,000 men were not to be treated for; and I told him that I really believed he was gone since I had neither seen him nor heard of him for so long a time.

I believe he has been reprimanded for advancing so far, or it is necessary it should be now thought he had no such directions.

Mr. Stanhope has sent me your plans, which shall be shown to my Lord Admiral.

I am, Sir,

Your most faithful humble Servant,

JAMES VERNON.

MR. VERNON TO GEORGE STEPNEY, ESQ.

Whitehall, April 3, 1702.

I have received this day your letter of the 29th of March; I can give you no account yet what will be resolved on concerning the 8,000 Saxons. The express who brought the last orders from the King of Poland, stays to come over with my Lord Marlborough, and then I suppose the matter will be determined.

Monsieur Vandermeer sent me an account of the conclusions that were taken at Nordlingen; the articles being sent me in High Dutch, I have had them translated, and shall take the first opportunity of laying them before her Majesty at the Cabinet Council. There are some points in them which I should be glad to know how they are understood in Holland, particularly the third article, about the

allies contributing to their ammunition and artillery, which I suppose my Lord Marlborough will be able to explain on his arrival.

I am, Sir,

Your most faithful humble Servant,

JAMES VERNON.

MR. VERNON TO GEORGE STEPNEY, ESQ.

Whitehall, April 7, 1702.

SIR,—I have received your letter of the 1st of April, and have communicated it to the Committee of the Lords of the Council. They have understood by what you write, and by the account the Prince of Hesse has given since the King's death, of his errand into England, what were the motives for pressing you to that memorial. When the Prince was dispatched from Vienna, which was about the end of December last, there was nothing then resolved by the Parliament about land forces to be put on board the fleet; but so great a number having been since provided, and a general of the Duke of Ormond's quality being appointed to command them,

it was not likely he would be willing to share the command, much less be under the direction of a Field Marechal or Commissaire* Plenipotentié. What expedients were intended to be proposed in that behalf I know not, but I must not conceal from you that the Duke's present notions are, that there may be great inconveniences in putting an officer upon him who, by virtue of his Imperial commissions, may interfere with and controul the designs he shall form.

I hope we and the Dutch may make up such a number of men as shall be sufficient for a sea expedition. If it were otherwise, I don't see how we should be helped by the two regiments you mention. I neither know where they are, nor in what condition, but I imagine the season would be lost before they could be embarked, so that we could depend upon nothing more than having a general from the Emperor, and that, you will agree with me, is the least wanting.

Count Wratislau is but lately come to the knowledge of this project, and was inquiring of me, a few days ago, what credentials the Prince brought over. I did not own to him to have seen them, I under-

* So written.

standing it was to be kept as a secret from him ; and since it was, he looked upon it as a chimera of the Prince of Hesse, and some of the Court went into it as not running any hazard by trying the experiment, how far he would be accepted of.

We must expect now how this matter will be managed by Count Mansfield at the council of war, and if you are desired to make any representations from them, or Count Wratislau have any directions about it, it will then be considered what answer shall be returned. In the meantime, you will understand, by what I have written, that this is looked upon as a very nice matter here. On one side I don't see any inclination to encourage a proposal of this nature, (which seems to be of no use or benefit); on the other side, all imaginable caution is thought necessary, that there may not be the least occasion given to doubt whether we are sufficiently disposed to gratify them. I don't know whether you will think yourself obliged to own that you have sent your memorial into England ; however, you will forbear taking notice that you have had any answer upon it : and I must earnestly recommend it to you to manage the affair with all the ——* and secrecy

* Word wanting.

that it requires, so as nothing may appear there of the proposals being disapproved of.

My Lord Marlborough returned hither on Sunday morning. It gives great satisfaction here that he left things so well in Holland. I hope he contributed to the making them so, which he is very intent upon. He has brought us over our article relating to the pretended Prince of Wales, signed by the Deputies of the States and by Monsieur —, to whose instrument Count Wratislau has now added his name. I am very glad that difficulty is over; and they ought to be well satisfied at Vienna that we are so far engaged;* and they will have no reason to doubt but we shall stand to our engagements.

I am, Sir,

Your most faithful humble Servant,

JAMES VERNON.

* The public declaration of war was not made till the 15th of May; but the whole of Europe was aware that England and France were actually at war.

MR. VERNON TO GEORGE STEPNEY, ESQ.

Whitehall, April 14, 1702.

SIR,—I have received your letters of the 5th and 8th inst., the first arrived on Saturday and the latter yesterday. I find the new credentials are come over for the Emperor's ministers here. Monsieur Hofman brought me a copy of his this morning, and I expect to receive Count Wratislau's to-morrow. The orders (you mention) are sent him to inquire into the operations of our fleet. He wrote to me yesterday, to desire the Queen would appoint him Commissioners, to whom he might open what the Emperor's sentiments are, in relation to the operations of the campaign; and particularly of the fleet, and concert those matters with them. The Queen has named the Duke of Somerset, my Lord High Admiral, the Earl of Rochester, the Earl of Marlborough, and the two Secretaries, who have appointed a meeting with him to-morrow morning at my office. I don't doubt but his design is to press an expedition of the fleet to Naples, as also that we should help them to the possession of the West Indies. I wish both these points were as

practicable as they are fine topicks to talk of. I don't doubt but we shall endeavour to give him all reasonable satisfaction ; but, as you observe, a latitude must be left to admirals as well as generals, to act as they shall see occasion.

I told you in my last that the Prince of Hesse's proposal was disliked, even by Count Wratislau, who says it was a matter we were willing to lay hold of to excuse our going to Naples. I am sorry to see what jealousies they entertain of us, and that the suspicions reached even to our late master, as if he were carrying on the design of the partition treaty, and had an underhand intelligence with France ; nothing, certainly, can be worse grounded than such an imagination. The effects will shew that we shall exert ourselves to the utmost against France, and if that does not give satisfaction, we are very unfortunate. One may venture to say, that the council at Vienna is not altogether so well able to judge of what is fit to be undertaken by a fleet, as the flag officers of England and Holland are, who will be cautious of advising more than they see likely to be executed, after having duly considered all the impediments that lie in their way.

I perceive Count Wratislau would now so far

support the Prince of Hesse, that he might go as volunteer only on board the fleet; but after the command he has pretended to, and declared his having a commission for it, I question whether the Duke of Ormond would be easy under it; and he would much less like the design you mention, of procuring for the Prince the command of 2,000 of the Dutch soldiers that are to be on board the fleet. I believe the Duke has explained himself to them, that he apprehends such an associate might lessen his share of honour in any successful enterprise, and turn the blame upon him, when the event does not answer expectation, which are two inconveniences he would avoid; and since he lays such a stress upon it, I hope it will be thought, even at Vienna, most advisable to leave one who hath given such proofs of himself, as the Duke has, to his own conduct; and they may depend upon it, that whatever he undertakes he will discharge it with the nicest sense of honour.

You have it in print that our master was buried on Sunday last; what alterations that may make in employments does not yet appear.

I am, Sir,

Your most faithful humble Servant,

JAMES VERNON.

MR. VERNON TO GEORGE STEPNEY.

Whitehall, April 17, 1702.

SIR,—I received this morning your letter of the 12th instant. For what I have to acquaint you with by this post, you will give me leave to refer you to the copy of a letter I write to Mr. Stanhope, since I shall be streightened in time, being obliged to attend the Council that sits this evening at St. James's.

I must not omit telling you Mr. Povey brought me a bill of your Extraordinaries to be allowed; but I desired him to keep it for a more seasonable time: when the coronation is over there will be a more regular course of business. At present there are nothing but expectations, who is to go out, and who is to come in.

I am, Sir,

Your most faithful humble Servant,

JAMES VERNON.

MR. VERNON TO GEORGE STEPNEY.

Whitehall, April 21, 1702.

SIR,—I have received your letter of the 15th instant. Monsieur Neswitz * has brought his new credentials, and had a private audience of the Queen: his negociation will stand still, till we see whether the Emperor will contract for the whole number of Saxon troops, for avoiding our entering into guarantees that may offend Sweden; and I wish they bear it patiently that we have any thing to do with the Saxon troops at all.

I send you the answer that has been returned to Count Wratislau's proposal, with a copy of what I have written to Mr. Stanhope upon it. I have only to add, that Count Wratislau was pretty impatient to know what the fleet particularly designed to do. I was not enough instructed in that particular to give him satisfaction; I assured him we were getting ready as fast as was possible, and then we

* This gentleman's name is written in every different way, both in these letters and in other documents of that period, but as I have no means of ascertaining the exact orthography, I leave it as I find it.

should not be idle. Perhaps he may make more of his inquiry from other hands.

I am, Sir,

Your most faithful humble Servant,

JAMES VERNON.*

MR. VERNON TO GEORGE STEPNEY.

Whitehall, April 28, 1702.

SIR,—In answer to your private letter of the 22nd, I can only say that your remarks are just; but I believe the method must be continued of communicating the foreign letters to a committee of the Council. Perhaps the number may be soon contracted, and then I hope the secret will be better kept. Count Wratislau got light of the Prince of Darmstadt's business by degrees, and from words dropt from him unawares: I know not where they had their beginning, but I stood upon the negative after I found he had fished it out. I suppose I need not tell you, at this time of the day, that my Lord Manchester and I are to make room for my

* I omit the letter which follows, as of no importance,

Lord Nottingham and Sir Charles Hedges. All I understand of the reason for it is, that a party will have it so. I make no difficulty in submitting, but hope the business will be better carried on. If you think fit to make me any answer to this letter, I desire it may be sent me under Mr. Yard's cover.

I am, Sir,

Your most faithful humble Servant,

JAMES VERNON.

MR. VERNON TO GEORGE STEPNEY.

Whitehall, April 28, 1702.

SIR,—I have received your letters of the 19th and 22nd instant. My Lord Marlborough and some other Lords have read what you wrote in your letter of the 19th, relating to the Elector of Bavaria; I hope due regard will be had to it, and that the States will be advised with as to what is to be done for the gaining this Prince. That will be best done when his Lordship is in Holland, whither he thinks of going towards the end of this week, or beginning of the next. Your letter of the 22nd shall be laid before the Lords at the first oppor-

tunity ; it explains some particulars that were lately hinted to me by Count Wratislau, which he said he would form into a memorial, but he has not yet done it.

One relates to the Prince of Hesse, for whom, he says, he has orders to press that he may go out with the fleet. The other point is, that eight frigates, of the fourth and fifth rates, may be sent between us and the Dutch to the Adriatic, to clear those seas of the French ships ; and he says ships of this burthen may come into their harbours, and have all conveniences there for refitting.

I don't hear of any such memorial * found in the King's closet as Count Wratislau mentioned ; I believe he has been informed since of that fact. The paper was drawn up by the Prince himself, since

* This was a draft, real or imaginary, of the project for that great expedition against Cadiz, which was afterwards executed under the command of the Duke of Ormond, Sir George Rooke, and the Prince of Darmstadt. It has been generally asserted that this scheme was suggested to William, shortly before his death, by the Admiral of Castille, and that the plan was found in William's cabinet after his death ; but it is evident, from these letters, that the fact of such a minute being found, was more than doubtful, and that the Prince of Hesse Darmstadt laid claim to the whole device. The expedition might have established a new line of Austrian Princes on the throne of Spain, but the misconduct of the commanders produced one of the most disgraceful and signal failures that ever befel the British arms.

the King's death, for her Majesty's information, as to the errand he came upon. I saw nothing in it to any one's disadvantage, only he said his credentials and commission (if he has any) was a private dispatch, prepared by Count Kaunitz, without the privity of any of the other ministers. You are already acquainted how that has been received here; what alterations may be made upon Count Wratislau's representations, you must expect to hear from some other hand; for I find my days are numbered, and the Seals are to be disposed of to some that are thought fitter to be intrusted with them, so that, perhaps, this may be the last opportunity I shall have to assure you, that I am, with great truth,

Sir,

Your most faithful humble Servant,

JAMES VERNON.*

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 1, 1702.

I must trouble your Grace once more, to tell you that I have got my quietus this evening, in the

* Here ends the official correspondence of Vernon with Stepney: another letter is extant, but it is merely one of compliment.

manner you foretold it when I first had the Seals given me, that they would not be taken away again without some recompense. It seems I was too obnoxious to the party to be continued in. My Lord Marlborough and Lord Godolphin both tell me they did what they could towards it. However that was, I own myself obliged to them for the provision that is made. I am told I shall have a pension of 1,000*l.* a-year, that my arrears shall be paid, and that my son shall be a Groom of the Bedchamber to the Prince.

If all this be performed, I shall have no reason to repine that I am turned out of company I could not have lived with, being made more easy in my fortune and my mind.

I please myself with the satisfaction I shall find in retirement, and the conversation of honest old authors. I wish the public may be in as great tranquillity, and then my quiet will be the more lasting.

I shall always think of your Grace with respect, and the deepest sense of gratitude.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

June 12, 1702.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 13th past. I must still write to you with uncertainties as to my own condition ; there is yet no performance of what was promised me at my giving up the seals : nor do I despair of it, supposing it may be deferred only till midsummer, when the new establishment is to be declared.

When this is done, I shall not regret the loss of the Secretaryship, but shall own my dismissal as a favour from my Lord Treasurer and my Lord Marlborough : since I am sensible I could not have been in public employment at this time without giving offence, and undergoing insupportable mortifications. For avoiding both those inconveniences I have declined coming into the next Parliament ; though, perhaps, I might have depended upon the kindness of my electors as much as ever. I could not bear in that place the reproaches that must attend a pensioner. Sir Harry Colt has chosen my Lord James Cavendish for a partner ; and Sir Benjamin Bathurst has joined with Sir Walter Clarges

to oppose them. I leave them the field of battle, and compound for quiet, desiring I may receive no more disturbance than I shall give.

It has been my ill fate, or management, to please neither party ; but I think I shall please myself if I can at last find a country retreat where I may be forgotten. I have no forgiveness to ask ; and if I did, I question whether it be a plant that grows in our country.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

June 26, 1702.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 10th inst. I thank God I have avoided the inconveniences you observe were attending upon pensions ; since my Lord Treasurer has been pleased of himself to procure me a Teller's place void by the removal of my Lord Jersey's son. I know not how that comes to pass, but it is strongly reported that he is likewise to resign the Chamberlain's office ; in lieu whereof he is to have ten thousand pounds, which, perhaps, he may like as well.

The Duke of Bedford is talked of to succeed him,

but I don't hear he thinks of purchasing it. I have a great colleague, Sir Christopher Musgrave being made a Teller in the room of Mr. Palmes, who they say is to have a pension of 1,000*l.* per annum, and I am told he is not dissatisfied.

The springs of these motions I can give no account of; but have great reason to be pleased with my allotment, and have nothing to wish for but the continuance of it.

I think one must not flatter oneself too much on that side; not that I distrust the hand that gave it, but it is to be feared that place-hunters will never leave pursuing those they have given chase to. While it lasts, I shall not make it a sinecure, for fear of Palmes's fate of being a prey to infidelity. I shall not, therefore, have my time upon my hands; and if I had, I despair of employing it so well as your Grace advises: I neither pretend to a talent in writing, nor am I furnished with materials. They that want a good invention, or a good collection, will be thought wiser if they hold their hands.

I am very sorry your Grace finds yourself no better with the Italian air. Every body must rather wish you here if it be equal to your health: though business should have no charms to engage you, I

should be glad to see such an example of wisdom and moderation among us. You will not find people disinterested ; but if you can help to make them so, it will be a blessed reformation.

The place that many hoped was reserved for you, is now, they say, disposing to my Lord Romney. I believe it is pretty much curtailed by the new regulation.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Duke Street, Aug. 21, 1702.

My Lord Orford has lost his sister, Mrs. Harbord, who died two days ago in Northamptonshire. My Lord Orford went over to her from Althorpe, where he left Lord Somers, and Lord Halifax : they had reconciled an old feud by bringing my Lord Montague to dine there. The first step towards it was my Lord Montague's standing very warmly by my Lord Spencer at his election.

I need not acquaint you that the Queen and the Prince go next week to the bath ; they will both drink the waters, and stay about a month.

I shall like my new employment very well, if

people will be content to let one alone in it; but that is scarce to be known till winter is over.

I am very sorry your Grace has no better health; I fear these accidents will hinder your return into England this winter. Perhaps the country would be more agreeable, if more were of your opinion as to indifference about employments.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Nov. 6, 1702.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 7th past. I wish you were not kept abroad by your spitting of blood; but as to being at home, I doubt whether you would have any great satisfaction in it at present. What the House of Commons have done in relation to the old impeachments, and threatening the Bishop of Worcester with a new one, on account of his opposing Sir John Packington's election; and the bill lately ordered to be brought in for discountenancing occasional conformity, keeps people pretty much in suspense what may follow upon these beginnings. I think the Lords don't intend to take any notice of this vote reflecting on

their judgment, but will reserve themselves to any application that shall be made to them upon it.

I don't hear that the Bishop of Worcester is much concerned at the charge against him; he does not disown that he rather wished another might be chosen knight of the shire, and gives this reason for it, that Sir John had said either after the last session, or the session before the King's death, that they had brought his nose to the grindstone, and in another session they would make him leap over a stick.

The bill of occasional conformity is not like to turn many out of their places, if it be not made with a retrospect; the promoters of the bill declared they had no thoughts of taking away the toleration. If any clause should be inserted to debar Dissenters of their votes in elections, the bill is like to be controverted in both Houses; otherwise I suppose it will pass quietly.

The Prince has been very much out of order with an asthma and cold, and what is worse, a spice of a lethargy. I think he got pretty well out of that by blisters and cupping. He has got some rest in two or three nights, but last night I hear he was a little uneasy with a cough, and felt some pains of the strangury, which I think usually follow upon blis-

ters. Besides, he had a little touch of the gout, which I suppose is reckoned a good discharge, when the head is affected.

The Queen would not be persuaded to lie from him during all his illness, though in many nights she had very little rest.

I believe the Parliament will go on very roundly with the supplies, and it is not doubted but a sum will be given to enable the Emperor to keep a greater army in Italy.

We are expecting home the Duke of Ormond, and Sir George Rooke. I hope the success at Vigo has silenced the disappointment at Cadiz ; till this last news came home, they were mightily running down Sir George Rooke's conduct, if this should be of the same humour, still it will not have the same effect.

If your Grace be concerned to know how I bear a lazy life, I will make a frank confession, that the quiet post I am in is infinitely preferable to the bustle of secretaryship. I only pray that nothing may break out to disturb it.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 28, 1703.

I have the honour and consolation of your Grace's letter of the 5th instant. I have not yet been before my judges, and therefore am still in the dark how they intend to proceed, whether the same rigour is to fall on all promiscuously. My apprehension is that this will gather into a torrent that is to bear down all that stands in the way. I am staked down by an employment that is in the public view, and tempts many to grasp at it; for that reason I should never have solicited, under my circumstances; and to have refused it when offered, would have had its inconveniences another way.

I know your Grace offers me your assistance with very generous intentions. I am sensible I stand in need of help, but I am ignorant in what way to ask it. What occurs to me at present may be of great use to me. If, when you write to my Lord Treasurer, you would please to mention me as one you have some concern for, that I have all my heart can wish, if one could with any quietness enjoy it; but if one is still in the eyes of envy, and must be

pursued for what one has, a less plentiful condition, with greater security, is much more eligible.

My Lord is able to penetrate into what is designed: perhaps it may be in his power to divert it; at least, he may make the fall easier if it be inevitable. If he were prepared to consider this case with the consequences that may attend it, I am in hopes he would encourage me to lay before him what I shall learn of the proceedings in this matter. I once ventured, in the last winter, to say something of it to him, but his notion then was, that this enquiry would not affect me, who was known to be otherwise employed. However the act has passed since that obliges every body to be equally accountable. Whether he be of the same opinion still I know not, and I am afraid to be importunate with him, unless your Grace shall think fit to make the way. If you please to recommend this affair to him, by the time your letter arrives, I suppose the Commissioners will have entered upon these accounts, and I may be able to make some judgment what they will aim at.

I shall not trouble you with news, which I know so little of, only I must mention my friend Mr. Methuen is not yet out of danger of being removed from the Chancellorship of Ireland. The Duke of

Ormond has pressed it from the time he was declared Lord Lieutenant, and continued to do so to the last. He went away with a promise, that if upon his coming into Ireland he found the public business there could be better carried on without Mr. Methuen than with him, he should be gratified if he proposed another for Chancellor.

I pray your Grace's good health, and beg your pardon for this freedom.

[*This letter produced the following from Lord Shrewsbury to Lord Godolphin.*]

DUKE OF SHREWSBURY TO LORD GODOLPHIN.

Rome, July 7, 1703, N. S.

I have by this post a very melancholy letter from Mr. Vernon, who is apprehensive of a great storm ready to fall on him, and that he is to run the same fate with his brethren of the Prize Office, though it is well known that his other important employments made it impossible for him to be present to have any share in their mismanagement. He is apt to believe that one of his chiefest crimes may be the enjoying an employment which many have an eye upon, and which, with all imaginable gratitude to

your Lordship, he confesses is so good, that it would satisfy his utmost ambition, if he might be allowed to remain in it quietly. But if this place is still to expose him to envy, I perceive he is resigned to content himself with a less plentiful condition, provided it may be with security. He is very desirous that your Lordship should allow him the honour to discourse you at full upon his circumstances, believing it may be in your power to help him; and if it be, he depends upon your generous temper, that you will add this great obligation to the many he is indebted to you for already.

My long experience of Mr. Vernon's many good qualities, some of which one would not expect under so rough an outside, makes me so much concerned for him, that if I knew in what manner most effectually to recommend him to your Lordship's protection, I am sure I would do it; but I am persuaded it will be sufficient to your justice to reflect, that he is now under persecution for mismanagements in which he had no share.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

August 13, 1703.

My Lord Treasurer* not having been in town since he was ill, I had no opportunity to speak with him till yesterday, at Hampton Court, and the place admitted but of a very short conference. My Lord was very obliging, and let me know how much I owe to your Grace.

He said you had wrote a very pressing letter to him in a matter that he hoped did not need it. He could not imagine that I should be affected in this enquiry; but, however, he would serve me in what he could. I desired I might wait on him when he was most at leisure, and shew him the representation I had made to the Commissioner. He not appointing any time, I believe it must rest till he comes from the bath, and perhaps by that time one may have a little more light how the Commissioners proceed in their examination. It seems probable that the Parliament will not meet till November, there being no directions given at the Council for a proclamation to notify their sitting.

* Godolphin.

It was expected my Lord Treasurer would have had the Garter yesterday, but no solicitations could prevail with him, so the Duke of Schomberg was elected alone.

My Lord would not so much as have come that day, but that it was to be proposed at Council that her Majesty, besides making good one-third of what is stipulated by the Portugal treaty, should take upon her the advancing a moiety of the Emperor's third, which met with no difficulty, it being looked upon as part of the original agreement, though it be only deducible from a separate instrument, signed by the Imperial Minister's promising, in his name, that the Archduke should repay one-third of the expences when he was in possession of the crown of Spain, which was proposed by the Dutch Envoy, and approved of by the English; and therefore it is hoped the States will think better of it, and take upon them their proportion of the whole, though at present they shew great reluctancy to it; and in the meantime, that all other points not contested, will be despatched out of hand, that this season be not lost.

It was further resolved that Mr. Methuen be immediately sent for Portugal, with the character of Ambassador Extraordinary.

Things in Scotland seem very perplexed; one sees no end of heaping up clauses in what they call an Act of Security, all tending to make it impracticable that the two kingdoms should hereafter be under one head. I suppose there is already more proposed than can be passed into an act, and yet they go on still; and we hear of a new clause by this day's post, proposed by Sir William Hamilton of Whitelaw, that all offices shall be void and determined by the death of the Queen, and all will be in the disposal of the Estates, that are then to meet.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

September 24, 1703.

The Speaker having put this letter into my hands for your Grace, I crave leave to make use of the opportunity to desire you will recommend me to him, as you were pleased to do to my Lord Treasurer.

I hope he is pretty well disposed already. Mr. Methuen, when he was here, did me very good offices with him, and he has himself spoke to me obligingly on that subject; so that I should expect

great effects of his assistance, if he saw he should gratify you in it.

My ease and relief being so much in his power, as well from his authority in the House as his particular influence on the commissioners who are to make the report, you will pardon my giving you this second trouble; and I hope he may receive your letter before this business be brought into the House, since I hardly think they will begin with it.

The Speaker seemed once in a mind to say something to me about your Grace, but said he would reserve it for another time, and now he is gone out of town. I always think it a good sign that people mean well to the public when they are looking towards your Grace.

I can't but hope that one time or another you will be a happy instrument of bringing some that are now at a distance to be in better intelligence, and to lay a foundation of union and tranquillity.

In the meantime, we hear you have taken some pains to bring the Venetians to be more favourable to the Allies, or at least the French are jealous of it. It is so good a work that I should be glad it were in such hands.

I would add some news if I knew any that was worth writing. The Parliament of Scotland is up, but in such a manner that as one would think the same should not meet again. They say some could hardly forbear threats, and laying hands on their swords, for their Bill of Security being refused them. One shall not be able to unriddle the mystery of this whole management till each party have their agents here, for they have been all very reserved in writing.

People's eyes are now turned towards the Irish Parliament, whether that will be more complying. If they give the Bill of Excise but for one year, as it is now sent them, that will be unsatisfactory, as falling short of what the Duke of Ormond gave hopes they would come up to, which was the continuing of that duty for three years.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

October 15, 1703.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 22nd past. What you are pleased so generously to offer me I have requested of you, when I sent you a letter from the Speaker about a month ago. I

hope that came to your hands, and then I don't doubt but I shall receive the benefit of it in its proper season. I found him entirely disposed to pay all respects to you, and to that I impute the kind expressions he used towards me ; so that your recommendation can't but stand me in great stead.

I don't know that my Lord Treasurer is yet come to town, though he is expected this evening from Newmarket. It is probable he will say no more to me than he has done ; and perhaps it is best to leave him to his own way, till one sees how this matter is like to be reported to the House.

If there had been any ground for the report of my going to Venice, I should not have failed to have given your Grace notice of it. I should have thought any proposal of that kind very unfortunate, since I could have so little complied with it. I find some have a notion that Mr. Hill may go thither before he returns home, and Mr. Stepney is like to have his commission to Turin : they knowing best at Vienna what will be the proper opportunity of sending an English minister to Savoy.

We hear the Queen and Prince think themselves better for their Bath journey. They are not expected at Kensington till Tuesday se'nnight.

The Duke of Queensbury is gone to Windsor, and taken my Lord Stair with him, who came with him from Scotland, where, they say, he stood firmly to him, when the rest of the ministers deserted him; and if they had done so, it is thought he might have made a better conclusion of the session, and obtained a subsidy,—at least Mr. ——— was apprehensive of it*. The other three, viz., the Marquis of Athol, Lord Tarbutt, and Lord Chancellor Seafield, are coming up together. If they can't be reconciled here, it will make some change among them; either the Duke of Queensbury will quit, or my Lord Stair be joined in business with him, as Chancellor or Secretary.

We want near a fortnight's letters from Ireland; but by what we have heard, hitherto, of that Parliament, they go prudently to work—respectfully towards the Queen, and not without regard to their own condition and circumstances.

* So written.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

December 24, 1703.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 17th of November. Though my letter was long on the way, and your Grace's did not come much quicker, yet I hope Providence has so ordered it, that your letter to the Speaker is arrived in the most proper season. The Commissioners have not yet made their report; perhaps they may have it ready against the meeting of the House, after this short adjournment. Of what nature it will be I am still ignorant, but what one daily sees, shows how necessary it is to have some support against so strong a current, which carries every thing before it; and therefore I am extremely obliged to your Grace for so effectual a recommendation, for such I hope it will prove. I have had some deliberation with myself whether I should carry the letter to the Speaker; but, in times of jealousy, such conclusions are drawn from people's only being seen together, that I thought it would be of more use to me, if I sent it enclosed in a letter, fairly and honestly acquainting him why I did not wait on him, and that I was ready to wait on him when he thought

fit. I sent him the letter this day, and when I hear what effect it has had, I shall not fail to acquaint you with it.

You have so constant an account of our public affairs, that I can't pretend to inform you so well, who keep myself as much retired as I can. I should be uneasy enough at the violence of men's passions, if I had nothing to apprehend from them ; but what they will at last hurry us into, God knows. Affairs abroad, compared with those at home, give but a very melancholy prospect. I don't doubt but there are some in the ministry who would keep things more within bounds if they could. But I wish they have not lost their opportunity, by throwing their weight so far into one balance as to put it beyond their power to bring it again to a counterpoise.

My Lord Halifax is singled out at present, immediately after an attack upon the whole House of Lords. They have hitherto acted with vigour and prudence ; certainly, both are very requisite in so troubled a sea.

I am glad your Grace is so well in your health as to think of coming home. I wish you don't find us past cure ; and then I shall hope you may be able to suggest some remedy.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

January 15, 1703-4.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 15th past, and have sent the enclosed to the Speaker. He was pleased to make me a visit on Sunday last, and told me he would return an answer to you, and do me what service he could.

My Lord Treasurer told me yesterday that he had seen both your letters to the Speaker; and asked me what my apprehensions were grounded on. I said I could not tell of what nature the report would be, which I thought was now ready to be presented; but whatever confidence I had in the goodness of my cause, I could not but dread the power of those who were to have the examination of it, especially, considering how some men are inclined to severity, and others to be indifferent, where their own safety is not concerned; and a man in a place is more obnoxious than one out of it, and therefore I had begged your Grace's recommendations to two persons, who, as they were the most inclined to moderation, had the greatest influence to induce others to it. His answer was, he hoped there was no such danger.

My Lord Halifax is come off easier than some intended he should : he was well advised to make it known that he insisted on no privilege. However, the information against him was ordered to be brought in, that a farther charge might be added to it out of the last year's report of the Commissioners of Accounts, that he had taken 500*l.* per annum out of the annuity fund, for the gratification of persons employed under him, to recompence their additional trouble, which was represented as contrary to the act granting that fund. But the law being looked into, no such thing appeared ; the remainder of the fund was no way disposed of, and therefore the Treasury might, as they did, by the King's order, give convenient salaries out of it to those who did the business, and it was then observed that this could be no peculiar crime in the auditor, but was the same in the tellers, who had 300*l.* per annum among them for keeping four clerks to attend the annuity payments. So that matter passed over.

Mr. How desiring notice might be taken how much greater moderation was now used than had been formerly, Sir Thomas Powys and Mr. Solicitor contributed to the letting it drop. Sir Edward

Seymour was not there that day, who has of late been pretty often absent from the House.

I don't doubt but Mr. Yard will send you the resolutions the Lords have taken upon the Commons' address, which I hear passed with little opposition. The Duke of Somerset is in the chair of the committee appointed to draw it into a representation in form.

My Lord Paulett broke loose from his party on this occasion, and spoke more vehemently of the ill treatment they had received than any body besides.

I send you my Lord Haversham's speech, made upon the rejecting the Conformity Bill. How it comes to be printed I know not, but they say he denies having any hand in it, but it agrees exactly with what he spoke. Those who heard him, wished a great deal of it had been unsaid, and like it worse now it is in print.

We hope the King of Spain gained Cap ——* before the wind changed. Your Grace knows what opinion some have all along had of Sir George Rooke ; but now they say the foreign ministers, as Count Wratislau and the Portuguese envoy, can't forbear shewing their dislike to his conduct.

* A word wanting.

The whole blame is laid upon him that the forces were not all brought away from Holland, and they further tax his remisness at Spithead, saying, if the Duke of Somerset had not taken upon him to quicken their departure, by getting all things ready for it, the fleet might have lain there till the wind was lost.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

March 24, 1703-4.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 1st instant, and must again acknowledge the favour of your former letters, which have been of the greatest use to me. I know not to what else I can ascribe my affairs passing over in silence this session. I have great reason to say with the psalmist, "The Lord was with those that helped me." The prize report has been the only one the House of Commons has not taken into consideration, though they did call for the rest of the report of the five commissioners, which they did for the relief of some persons belonging to the army, and these commissioners are continued, by a new clause in an act,

for three months longer, for the dispatch of some army accounts ; and there being no instructions given them in relation to the prizes, it makes it more signally appear that there is a powerful influence which tempers things at present, as to this particular. I hear from all hands that the Speaker has, with art and industry, put off this part of the report, insomuch that some of my old friends have inquired of me how that came about.

I told them I hoped it proceeded from good nature, and an unwillingness to see innocent people ruined. But my real thoughts are, that both the Speaker and my Lord Treasurer were desirous this matter should go off easily, in regard to your Grace's recommendation, which I beg you will take notice of when you have occasion to write to either of them, and that, I am sure, will be of further advantage to me. I look upon myself as a man under a reprieve, who can't but be importunate for the continuance of it, till Providence opens a way for his discharge.

I have not been without my fears that the Lords would have disturbed my quiet, from the committee they appointed to inspect the reports of both the commissions, whereof my Lord Stamford is chairman. They sent their directions to all parties concerned, to return their answers to what they were

charged with by the said reports ; and, accordingly, all that have made answers to the Commons have delivered the same to them. Mr. Parkhurst was served with the like order, directed to him by name, and the rest of the commissioners of prizes in general, by which he is required to return an answer with convenient speed, but no day named. It is now near three weeks since, and upon this we expected the Commons would have sent their orders, whereupon we resolved among ourselves to carry our respective orders to both Houses at the same time, as others had done. But no directions coming from the Commons, it has been a difficulty upon us to know what to do. We concluded that, if it gave no offence to the Lords, it would be best for us to defer answering till the Commons likewise required it. However, Mr. Parkhurst, and others who continued to the end of the commission, prepared their answer, and shewed it to some of their friends among the Lords, to satisfy them the charge admitted of an answer, and they had it already, though they desired to delay putting it in, since it could not be proceeded on this session, and might only provoke displeasure against another.

I hope the Lords will understand it aright, and not throw us into the briars unnecessarily. Of all

the answers they have called for, I don't hear they have considered any more than my Lord Orford's. I suppose they will do something for his vindication, but the rest of the accountants are like to remain under the censures the House of Commons have put upon them, and I fear we shall fare yet worse, if we began answering before the Lords.

All these matters would have been over, but that the Lords find it necessary to continue the sessions for their own vindication in several particulars; and in requital to reflections on the past management, they think fit to shew that faults are to be found in all times, when narrowly looked after. The plot has occasioned the delay.

The committee of seven Lords have certainly done all that lay within their power for discovering the correspondence between Scotland and France. Yet some say it amounts to little more than was contained in the papers sent to the two Houses. I can't understand whether the gibberish letters are entirely decyphered or not. They are not reported at length, but only the substance of them; some, therefore, think more has been communicated to them *, and by them to the Queen, than appears by

* Meaning, I suppose, the Committee of Peers.

that report. The discovery being made on those terms, I don't trouble you with the resolutions, which you will have from other hands. Those are endeavoured to be cried down, as if they were more like to obstruct the settlement of the succession in Scotland, than promote it with a nation so jealous of their independency, that they will neither be directed by an English ministry nor an English Parliament.

But I suppose this is the reasoning of people otherwise averse to the House of Hanover. The other points before the Lords are miscarriages in the fleet ; the committee have reported the business of Admiral Graydon, and the House have agreed to their opinion, that he ought not to be employed any more ; whether they will make an address to that purpose I know not : the next thing is to consider Sir Cloudesley Shovel's instructions, when he went last year to the Mediterranean.

The Lords have prepared a long representation of the Aylesbury case, in which my Lord Chief Justice Holt's argument will be inserted at length, which he spoke in the House of Lords in defence of himself for giving that judgment. It is said upon it, that he now leads the House of Commons in

triumph, as he did formerly the House of Lords in the Earl of Banbury's case.

Some observations are intended likewise on the Commissions of the Peace, to shew the meanness of some and the doubtful affections of others in those Commissions.

They will conclude with clearing themselves from the imputations in the address that desires her Majesty to reassume her authority, &c. So that the whole can't be finished before the middle of next week ; and that they may have time for it, they have put off going into a committee on the Subsidy Bill till Monday next.

You will have little satisfaction to consider how our animosities grow higher and higher ; all we see hitherto tends to widening the breach. I have heard there is an healing spirit at work, to bring some great ones to a better understanding with one another. God grant it may prevail, for we never had more need of it.

Since I finished this letter, I hear from the House of Commons that the prize accounts are not likely to go so quietly off as I imagined. Some of the warm gentlemen moved that the Commissioners of Prizes should be ordered to return their answers to the report against them ; and, that it might be done

with all fairness, that they should have copies of the report, and be allowed till Monday se'nnight to return their answer ; but a young member of that side overshot himself, by letting fall words that shewed their intention was to adjourn till that day, and so to keep the session on even beyond the Lords' time, and whoever would have put an end to it, must have undergone the censure of designing to stifle a vile corruption. This artifice taking air, was strenuously opposed. It was urged the Commissioners of Prizes ought not to have so much time allowed them, considering that the Lords had long since required their answer, and it could not be doubted they were prepared to give it ; and therefore, it would be sufficient if they were allowed to Monday or Tuesday next. However, those gentlemen insisted on their own question, that the answers should be brought on Monday se'nnight, and the House divided upon it, but the negative carried it by 85 against 81. So that it is ordered now, that we should answer on Monday next. I can't but make two remarks upon this incident ; one is, that there is an over-ruling Providence that orders things for the best, and very often contrary to human appearances.

What I wished the Lords had not done, proves

so far serviceable, that without it we could not have had our answers ready, and we should have passed our time very ill, if for want thereof the charge should have been taken *pro confesso*. The other consideration is, what an artifice Parliament management is grown to, and how ensnaring some men are, that under a shew of fairness the greatest rancour should be concealed.

I perceive now, we have been kept in reserve, to be produced when other means are wanting to inflame the House. I don't say this in relation to my two patrons above-named, who I am sure have no hand in this day's work. What is farther intended will soon appear.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

March 31, 1704.

I write now to your Grace with a greater quiet of mind than I did the last post, my concern ending on Monday much better than I expected.

After our answers had been presented and read, there arose an angry debate; but Sir Christopher Musgrave proposed very early the question that passed, for the obliging Mr. Parkhurst and Mr.

Pascall to make up the prize accounts, according to the course of the Exchequer. The best I expected was, that all should have been put under that obligation; but this seasonable motion from one in authority, prevented it. All that looked angrily towards me was, that Colonel Byerly observed that I had received four years' salary for nothing.* I ought to bear that reproach, since I had never disowned it, but grounded my defence upon it, and had always wished that I might be obliged to refund that and have no further trouble. Sir Thomas Littleton and Mr. Clark said something in favour of Mr. Parkhurst. It was a little wondered at in the former, since if the debate had gone on, it might have involved all the commissioners, and he was one of them at the beginning. But the House was so disposed to be as easy as it was possible, in a matter that had been so clamoured at, that they would not take the provocation. This obliges me to renew my request to your Grace, that when you write to my Lord Treasurer or Mr. Speaker, you would please to take notice how obliging they have been, in their care that your recommendations

* During those four years he did almost the whole of the laborious business of the Secretary of State's office, with no other appointment than private secretary to Lord Shrewsbury.

should not be frustrated. One does not know what use one may still have for their kindness.

How these accounts will come out, God knows ; or whether all the vouchers have been duly taken and preserved. I thank God I am excused from the trouble of auditing, which I should have been utterly incapable of. But one can't tell how far one may be hereafter made liable to other people's mistakes ; and therefore one can't but beg for the same protection as there may be occasion for it, either at the Treasury or elsewhere.

I hear Mr. Parkhurst is extremely disturbed at these votes that have passed on him and Pascall. He has all along endeavoured to make it a common case that should fall upon all the commissioners alike ; and now places the severity of his censure that any distinction has been made, which with his leave I must say does arise naturally enough out of the case, and the favour lay in considering people's circumstances where they differed.

These two gentlemen got themselves continued by a new constitution from the Treasury, when the commission of prizes was determined ; and by virtue thereof they received and paid several sums of money, and took to themselves their former salaries of 500*l*.

per annum ; and in the meantime let the accounts lie neglected till the House of Commons fell upon them for it. However, Mr. Parkhurst has been endeavouring to stir up the Lords to take our answers into consideration, which we delivered to my Lord Stamford, their chairman of the Committee of Accounts, the same day we attended the Commons. But I hope he will not be gratified in bringing others into trouble when it will be no manner of relief to himself.

I am just now told that the House of Lords have adjourned till Monday. They have been waiting on the Queen with several addresses, to which I am told her Majesty has made particular answers to their satisfaction. I am told only of that which relates to the Justices of the Peace. By their address they desire that the Commissions of the Peace may be reviewed, and such only continued therein as are persons of quality and estate, that are well affected to her Majesty's government, as also to the Protestant succession, and to the Church of England as by law established. To which the Queen has answered, that she thinks persons so qualified the fittest to be in the Commissions of the Peace.

The Lords have added, in the same address, that

such as refused to take the oaths to the late King were unfit to be Justices of the Peace ; and such as had been put out of the Commission since the Queen's accession to the throne, and were qualified as is above mentioned, should be again put into the Commission of the Peace.

When this matter was debated in the House of Lords yesterday, my Lord Keeper had many rubs given him, about persons put in and left out of the Commissions : particularly that my Lord Somers was left out of the Commission of the Peace for Worcestershire, which they told him was the more scandalous, since that Lord had sat on that wool-sack with more reputation than those that came either before him or after him.

All that the Lords presented to-day is ordered to be printed, together with the state of the Aylesbury cause. I don't doubt but your Grace will receive from other hands their resolutions : the Commons will not have time to reply to them now ; but perhaps, they will not forget them when they meet again, which makes it very problematical whether in this state there should be a new Parliament or not ; and how animosities that are arisen so high can be composed. Some fear my Lord Treasurer

may think it so difficult as not to care to hold his staff any longer, but sure that will be no way to make things mend.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 26, 1704.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 3rd inst. I hope you have received the letters I wrote since the 24th of March, which would inform you that my affair concluded better than I expected in that session. One has present ease, though with a mixture of concern how this is to end at last. At present poor Mr. Parkhurst has alone the trouble of attending auditors and the Treasury. But whether he has every thing to produce that may be necessary for stating those accounts, I know not; nor can I tell how far all the Commissioners may be still involved in whatever exceptions shall be taken; and therefore, I desired your Grace would recommend me to the same protection that has hitherto been of the greatest use to me, and they are the most capable of befriending me either as to the public or private enquiry.

I suppose you may have occasions to write either to my Lord Treasurer, or Mr. Speaker, who is now more commonly called Mr. Secretary. He told me he would write to you by this post, and send me the letter to enclose it, but it is not yet brought me. Your Grace will believe that I am very glad to see him in this post; I must own that I was uneasy enough while it was undisposed of, to hear myself so often mentioned on that account. I believe you may remember how desirous I was to avoid it at first, and many reasons are since added to make me look upon it with greater terror, but I feared what I was in no danger of; and I believe now nobody has been thought of from the beginning, but the gentleman who has it. He has certainly those qualities which give him exceedingly the preference to any I have heard spoken of: the great doubt has been how this is consistent with the Speakership; but that is only determinable when the Parliament meets, and it will be incongruous or otherwise, according to the humour they shall be in at their sitting down. They are not so of a piece that people can know what their resolves will be. But one may imagine that a thinking ministry will make a surer judgment of an old

Parliament than a new one, and therefore, I am satisfied he will run no risk of being exposed, whether he is to continue in the chair or not for a concluding session.

The foreign ministers find he* understands French perfectly well, though it is not yet as easy for him to speak it as he does Latin. What opinion the parties here will have of him, will depend upon the course he shall take in the ministry; at present the Tories lay the late changes at his door, and the Whigs hold themselves in suspense, not seeing any advances made towards them.

It is not to be doubted something will be done before winter to satisfy the scruples of one side or the other. Perhaps some remarks will be made upon what passed yesterday at the christening of my Lord Treasurer's second grandson, where her Majesty in person, my Lord Treasurer, and Lord Sunderland were sponsors.

I shall conclude with a short mention of my son, whom I expect every day over: I am afraid it may be thought an improper thing for an envoy to leave his post in a war time. But the King of Denmark taking a journey of three or four months to Norway,

* Harley.

and not suffering any foreign minister to go along with him, my son took that opportunity to ask leave to wait on the Prince, not having once done it since he has had the honour to be upon his establishment as one of the grooms of the bedchamber. Besides, he has a pretension to be clerk of the council when the second turn falls, being sworn in extraordinary in the King's time, and going out of the kingdom before his Majesty's death, his claim wants reviving, which may be of use to him under our uncertainties. I may add, that one who goes abroad young may be always thought so, till he appears again, and shews his improvements, if he has made any. I hope he comes very seasonably to inform Mr. Secretary of the state of that court, and that he will go away in his good opinion.

Your Grace's great favour and patronage emboldens me to trouble you with all my concerns, though I know these are egotisms, as my Lord Bradford calls them, that I ought to beg pardon for.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

June 2, 1704.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 10th of May, N. S., and am sorry for the account it gives of the return of your spitting blood. We have had such warm weather all last month, that if the like has been in Italy I hope you will need no other remedy.

Mr. Secretary Harley has not yet sent any letter for your Grace, and I have not seen him since my last. But you intending to write to him so soon, to be sure, his answer will not be long after it.

I have heard no more of my Lord Treasurer, as to any thoughts he might have had of laying down. If ever that happens, it will be a great misfortune to the public; but his getting his friends about him into places of the highest trust is a good sign he will stick to business, and I hope he will daily increase the number of proper assistants.

Our affairs look very well at present at home, and are like to continue so, if no disorder comes from abroad. What seems most suspicious to me is our sea concerns. I wish Sir George Rooke* be

* He had sailed upon the expedition which proved fruitful in the capture of Gibraltar.

not gone so far out of the way towards the coast of Catalonia as to give the Breste and Toulon fleets an opportunity to join, and to post themselves between Rooke and Shovel, which may be very dangerous to them both. You will hear sooner than we shall what will attend us in this crisis.

I don't know whether matters will go very smoothly in the Scotch Parliament, which is to meet within three weeks; but if they should be still refractory, that may admit of a future remedy, though her Majesty has made several steps towards gaining of those who seemed to have the majority last year. For their gratification the Duke of Queensbury is removed from being Secretary, which it is said will be given to the Commissioner's son. This Lord Yester* is looked upon as a young man of very good parts. Mr. Johnston is supposed to be the great adviser of the new scheme, and if it succeed, it is thought he will be made Lord Register, which a friend of the Duke of Queensbury's is now possessed of. Some believe the Parliament will begin with the plot, and manage it with so little temper, as not to think of any thing else; if so, the session may end abruptly. If they can be so

* So written.

managed as to comply with what will be proposed to them, they may establish themselves, and share the preferment among them.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

August 18, 1704.

I received the honour of your Grace's letter of the 12th July on Saturday last. This is the first Italian post day since. I am extremely obliged to your Grace for writing on my account to my Lord Treasurer and Mr. Secretary ; that I doubt not will have its effect in its proper time.

Your Grace being pleased to require my thoughts upon the reports you have heard of in relation to yourself, and expecting I should do it with all freedom, I must not omit acquainting you that your old friends, being disappointed of the hopes they had of seeing you here last winter, have expressed some dissatisfaction upon it, and would not allow the want of health to be the only reason for it. They think the House of Lords, having stood in the gap for two years together, ought to have the assistance of all of the same principle ; and in those who with-

draw themselves, they call it fear, or a care only of their own preservation : and as to your case, some have rather made worse insinuations, as if your long stay at Rome had given you some better opinion of their religion.

I know your Grace has not been wanting to make it understood since you have been there, that that place is more like to cure one of any prepossessions one might have that way ; but, however, it is absolutely necessary I should mention it, because having dined with the Archbishop of Canterbury since I received your letter, and had some discourse with him in private upon the subject of it, he declared himself entirely satisfied of your perseverance ; but, however, some malicious reports having been spread, he wished that if you did not come over soon, that you would take an occasion to write to some friend in confutation of that calumny. I have thought since, that if you approved thereof, you would either write to the Archbishop himself, (who I am confident has a true respect for you, and gave this as a mark of it), or otherwise you will do it to your relation, the Bishop of Oxford, who will be no less industrious to do you right in the most proper places.

The good Archbishop fears you will run too great a hazard in exposing yourself to a winter journey, and our cold climate, while you are so subject to relapses; and he thinks that none who really is your friend can desire it. But I offer it to your Grace, to consider whether you will not think it fit to quit that residence and remove somewhere more northerly, to make a trial, by degrees, how cooler climates may agree with you. I believe you would be very welcome at Vienna; and I should think people would be very glad to hear you were there. I take it to be a milder and steadier air than ours; and if you should not be able to bear that, it is to be apprehended you would be worse here. But I should be sorry you should leave Italy, if there were now a more favourable opportunity for (what has been formerly talked of) bringing the Venetians, by your means, into the grand alliance. That, indeed, would be a business fit for your interposition, and may prepare you for a more troublesome reconciling work, which many hope to see you employed in at your return, of bringing people to a better understanding one with another, that seem at present to be at too wide a distance. I hope my Lord Marlborough will overcome envy as well as the common enemy; but as

dangers decrease from abroad, they may strengthen at home, if there be not great prudence used to prevent it. For aught I can perceive, the same ferment will discover itself again next winter; one side will not be contented with less than all, and it is not to be expected the other will bear being excluded; and till some happy medium be thought of, all exasperations will be laid hold of. The sea may furnish matter of complaint when the land don't. The Bill of Conformity will be pushed by one side, and the state of Scotland be inquired into by the other, where we are told they are so ripe for an insurrection, that the Bill of Security has been allowed to pass as an expedient for their present quiet, though, by the power it gives them of getting into arms, it may make them more formidable hereafter; but it is likewise hoped we may be in a better posture to bear their ill-humour. The supply they have given will subsist the troops but for a short time; since they have appropriated all but 12,000*l.* to the paying an old army arrear, and the maintenance of three frigates, employed for the convoy of their ships.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

October 13, 1704.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 27th of September, and have, and shall make it my endeavours to shew some people the falsities of what they have heard.

In what you write in relation to peace, I suppose it relates to the report of a hermit that came to you from Cardinal Janson, which was much talked of about the spring; and since, it has been said the Pope, intending to concern himself in bringing about a peace, would, among other means, put proposals into your hands, in order to make it relished in England. What you have writ on this subject will, I hope, stifle that calumny. I shall take the first opportunity to let my Lord of Canterbury know how desirous you are to satisfy him in particular, which I am confident will have its effect, and he will make right use of it for your vindication. I think it best to leave it to the Bishop of Oxford to communicate himself what is writ to him on that subject, which he will not fail to do, and every thing succeeds best in its natural course.

In the meantime, I hope you will be under no uneasiness at idle rumours, which nobody is exempt from; and they vanish the sooner the less they are minded. If I were to guess at the rise of them, I can't but suspect it is among those that are jealous that you are more inclined to the present ministry than they could wish. If that be the case, I can't wonder at your resolution of living quietly at home, till you have considered which way you can best employ your talent for the service of the Queen and country. I don't know but the ablest man may be at a stand to know what to judge of affairs here, notwithstanding our astonishing success at land; and if our sea conduct don't challenge applause, there will be nothing stuck upon it; yet murmurs will still find a vent, rather than want them we will fetch them from Scotland, where two Acts of Parliament passed last in the last Session, viz., about arming the country and the exporting of wool, are to be made handles, as far as they will go, to the mortifying our ministry, which they say are to be improved by persons that have hitherto been very different in their opinions: I don't understand the policy of such an alliance.

I think it is no hard matter to see who will be

the dupes. If the opportunity of engaging valuable friends be let slip, the first scene that opens will be about the Speaker, whether he should continue in the chair or not. It is very probable he won't look upon himself as made unqualified for it by being Secretary; and if the House are so disposed, the arguments that were made use of formerly, to keep Sir Edward Seymour in the chair when he was made Privy Counsellor, may serve again against an objection that is very little stronger. But we hear that some are fixed upon having Mr. Bromley, and that others will so far assist them as to be willing the chair should be vacant, without any further concern who shall fill it. What good can be expected from such a management, that shews only an impotence and irreconcilableness, I don't understand. I wish, therefore, it may be better considered, for this seems to be a crisis that may be very beneficial or hurtful, as it shall be well or ill handled.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

October 20, 1704.

I gave your Grace an account last post of the receipt of your letter of the 27th past. The next day I waited on the Archbishop, at Lambeth, and communicated to him both the letters: he will take no notice to the Bishop of Oxford of having seen his. He owns himself obliged to your Grace for giving him this satisfaction, which he repeated again was not necessary on his own account, farther than it enabled him, with greater assurance, to contradict these sinister reports. He desires I would assure you of his readiness to serve you on all occasions.

As we draw nigher to the meeting of Parliament, I think the discourse abates of making the Speaker's chair vacant. It is said Sir Edward Seymour is not like to be here the first day, and without him no angry point will be much maintained.

There are some changes lately made in Scotland: we shall soon see whether it will create any better opinion of settling the succession there.

The late managers of what is called Mr. Johnstone's scheme, are now in public employments, the

Commissioner is made Chancellor, and my Lord Seafeld returns to his post of Secretary of State; the Earl of Roxburg is made his colleague; the Earl of Cromartie, who makes room for it, is to be Justice General, an office that has for some time been disused, but is revived again on this occasion. The Duke of Athol is removed from the Privy Seal, which is given to the Earl of Rothes. My Lord Cromartie's brother is likewise put out from being Justice Clerk, and that is given to Sir William Hamilton, of Whitelaw. Mr. Johnstone's nephew, Bailey, is made Treasurer Deputy, and the Lord Selkirk, the Lord Yester, and Sir James Hume are provided for in the Treasury, from whence Lord Eglinton is dismissed with some others. My Lord Belhaven is likewise in the Treasury. Thus far the preferments are all shared among the new set; all the notice yet taken of others is, that the Earl of Leven is restored to his government of the castle of Edinburgh, from which he had been displaced to make room for a brother or brother-in-law of the Duke of Queensbury. This change points to the exclusion of the said Duke of Q——, and his particular friends. However, he seems well enough satisfied with it, and finds his consolation in the

Duke of Athol's being no longer in the ministry, with whom he is most irreconcilable.

They tell us this is the likeliest way to bring about what the Queen has recommended to them, in relation to the succession, and they have brought up an address from the Scotch Parliament, which desires the Queen would take care that the House of Lords in England should not meddle in their affairs; since that would give the greatest obstruction to the accomplishment of her desires. Perhaps one may find these two great bodies may neither of them like the one prescribing to the other by way of address.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

December 1, 1704.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 15th of November. I have since seen Mr. Speaker, who, enquiring after your Grace, told me he had written two letters since his being Secretary, and feared they had miscarried. I could satisfy him they were not received, but to confirm his having writ, he said it was in relation to Venice,

and that the Duke of Marlborough had writ to you to the same effect. I hope, therefore, you received the letters of the one or the other, since it seems to be a matter the public is concerned in.

I don't doubt but what you writ to my Lord Treasurer and the Secretary in my behalf will have its effect, as far as it lies in their power, though there has been no more said of it to yourself than to me: one may trust some men's silence more than other men's words. I have not yet been brought on the stage during this session, though something has passed that may have a tendency that way. Enquiry has been made why Parkhurst and Paschall have not been prosecuted according to their address. The Remembrancer of the Exchequer has answered to it, that he wanted the commission and instructions on which the process is grounded. Mr. Dormer, brother-in-law to Parkhurst, took that occasion to say there had been several commissioners of prizes, who were well enough known, and he saw no reason why two of them only should be obliged to make up the accounts. There was nothing more said to it then, but it was appointed to consider the Remembrancer's report. On the same day, my Lord Halifax's business came on, which having taken up

the whole day, it has not been mentioned since, but may be taken up when any one pleases.

I often hear your Grace's letter to the Bishop of Oxford spoken of, and always with great approbation; particularly the Bishop of Worcester expressed himself as one tenderly affected with it, and very much concerned that it should not take wind while you were at Rome, lest it might provoke them to do you a mischief, for he had heard some copies of your letter had got into private hands, which he said he cautioned the Bishop of Oxford against, purely in consideration of your safety. I hope there is no ground for those apprehensions, especially now you are on your removal; but they shewed so tender a regard for your Grace that I can't but mention them.

I may spare you the trouble of hearing repetitions upon Parliament affairs. This week has raised great expectations; that of tacking the Conformity Bill to the Land Tax is over. The side that lost it, found themselves so much mistaken in their numbers, that they are still more and more incensed against the ministry, who they say have debauched their party from them, and therefore they are not like to make much difficulty of excluding any placemen out of the House.

It is thought a trial may be made upon persons concerned in the prize office, who make up fourteen members; and if they will send such a bill to the Lords, without tacking it, they need not doubt of their concurrence. The other matter of importance is begun in the House of Lords, and still depending. They spent Wednesday in consideration of Scotch affairs.

My Lord Rochester opened it, and would have had their Act of Security read. My Lord Nottingham seconding him, enlarged upon it. My Lord Wharton and my Lord Somers opposed the reading the act, though it was done in the Darien business; yet they observed that was an act printed at Edinburgh, by authority, but this comes to them no otherwise than in the *Flying Post*, and other prints of no greater authority, which likewise disagree in the account they give of it.

Though my Lord Somers disagreed to the reading the act, yet he did not much differ in opinion as to the inconveniences of it, and found no less fault with another act passed in that Parliament for exporting wool; but, in conclusion, he moved for a longer time to consider what they should advise by way of remedy for the mischiefs these acts portended. This was readily seconded by my Lord

Rochester, as if it had been by concert between them, but I think that is not the case. It is rather supposed they have different aims, for many things have happened of late as may induce one to believe that the old and new ministry may grow to understand one another better.

My Lord Treasurer took an occasion to speak pretty plainly in this matter; he owned he had known a good deal of Scotch affairs of late, and wished he had not seen them as they were. He could not disagree but the Bill of Security might have an untowardly aspect, but yet as circumstances then stood, there might have been more immediate danger in refusing the royal assent, and whatever ill look it had at present, he thought it was not without remedy.

Some think my Lord advanced too far, and gave a handle against himself, to be charged as the adviser of passing the bill; but I can't but think he had well considered what he would say.

The Queen, who was present at the debate, might expect something should be said in her behalf, as far as she was concerned; and I must always remember the Partition Treaty, which I think could never have

been pushed so far, if every body would have owned at first what they knew of it, and said as much for it as it would bear.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

December 8, 1704.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 22nd past. There is no reason for your Grace's making any serious reflections on the story of the hermit—it is over long since; and since that the Duke of Marlborough has writ in relation to a peace, that if the Parliament here went on vigorously this year with their supplies, that all necessary preparations might be made in due time for the next campaign, he was confident the Queen might prescribe the terms of peace by next winter; so that will be above board dealing, and bring nobody under suspicion. If you come home according to your first intention, I hope things will look agreeably enough, and that you will find great difficulties over, and accommodations made that I once thought as hard to be compassed as the general peace. I acquainted you last week with the first overture of

the Scotch business in the House of Lords. They were upon it again on Wednesday last, and it proceeds gradually, according to the plan already hinted at. The Lords that entered the lists on Wednesday were, the Earl of Rochester, the Earl of Nottingham, and Lord Haversham on one side; and my Lord Somers, Lord Wharton, and Lord Halifax, on the other, her Majesty being again present at the debate. The three first mentioned Lords pressed the House to pass a judgment on the Scotch Act of Security, that it was of pernicious consequence, tending to defeat the Protestant succession, and to alienate the two kingdoms from one another. Some of them came out with it in the debate, that this question being carried, would lead them to enquire who gave the advice for passing it; and it was likewise said that from whomsoever the advice came, the Queen ought to have withstood it. The other three Lords opposed that question, thinking they ought rather to apply themselves to find out the best remedy they could. They were not for telling the Scotch they ought not to pass any act that House should not like, but leaving them to their own freedom and independence, which they shewed such a jealousy of. When they saw any

thing done this kingdom ought to be affected with, it seemed more Parliamentary to obviate it in a legislative way; and therefore my Lord Somers moved that they should go by way of bill, wherein they might show that if the Scotch pretended to set up a separate kingdom, they in probability would be the greatest losers by it; and since they had so mean an esteem of the advantages they had by their present union with England, perhaps the generality there might have a better opinion of them when they saw any danger of their being lost; and in order thereto, he proposed that the House should go into a grand committee on Monday, to consider of proper heads for such a bill or bills.

My Lord Treasurer came into this motion, as the most likely means to obtain what they aimed at from Scotland. Some Lords anticipated the debate appointed for Monday, and hinted at some heads they thought proper; such as prohibiting Scotch cattle to be brought into England, the suppressing their hawkers and pedlars, and incapacitating Scotchmen from having any employment here, civil or military; and as they opened it, they would not have this to operate immediately, but that there should be a competent time allowed in the bill, before it should

take place. Whereby is understood, that if the Parliament of Scotland, in their next session, shall come to a better temper, these acts may likewise be revived at our next Parliament without being put in execution. My Lord Halifax, I hear, spoke long and very well; he put them upon considering how this ill blood had been breeding in Scotland for several years, ever since the Darien project was set on foot; and he remarked that the same gentleman, meaning Mr. Johnston, who had so principal a hand in promoting that act, was no sooner advanced to the ministry again, but we see another notorious breach made upon the good understanding between the two kingdoms.

My Lord Pawlet said something in vindication of his kinsman Johnston, but closed with the motion for proceeding by bills.

My Lord Peterborough likewise spoke in favour of Johnston, and carried his discourse further than there seemed any occasion for, towards an apologising for the ministry, who, he thought, were to be pitied in having such a load upon them, as to be contesting at the same time with the folly of Portugal, the obstinacy of the Emperor, the selfishness of the Dutch, and the madness of Scotland, all superadded to the power of France. The Bishop of Salisbury

said nothing that day. The Lords who proposed the first question insisted pretty much upon having it put ; but the House showed no disposition towards it, insomuch that my Lord Nottingham told them they were not for going to the bottom of the sore ; to which my Lord Mohun replied, they would go as far as was necessary to the healing of the wound, and asked his Lordship if he were for rubbing it to a gangrene.

Matters being thus well prepared in the House of Lords, the great expectation is, whether the Commons will go in the same method, when they enter upon the consideration of it on Tuesday next. If they concur, I hope the two kingdoms, as well as the administration, will find their quiet by it.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

December 4, 1707.*

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 29th past. We were in a committee upon the Land

* A great lapse takes place here in the correspondence, which I have not had the means of supplying, though doubtless, there are many other letters existing.

Tax, and have gone as far as the Scotch proportions; that and the Commissioners' names will go near to take up to-morrow and Friday. We were this day in a committee again upon the fleet, and Admiral Whitston attended to answer the merchant's charge against him, for ill-conduct in convoying the Russia fleet this summer. He made an answer that, if it does not clear him, will keep off any blame from the Prince's* council on that account. However, he is to attend again on Saturday next, and bring his journal with him. They were once drawing towards a conclusion to-day. Mr. Ward, the merchant, proposed a question, that the petitioners had proved the allegations of their petition to the satisfaction of the Committee, which Sir Gilbert Heathcote seconded, and if it had been put it would have been carried. But Mr. Churchill† saying they had indeed made proof of their losses, but it did not yet appear whether those happened through neglect in those that were entrusted in the Admiralty, or by misfortune only; that they hoped to satisfy the House there had been no care omitted, which they were preparing, and would have been ready before

* He was High Admiral.

† One of the Prince of Denmark's council.

now to do, but that the House were every day sending for new papers, and they did not expect it would come to a question till they had the whole before them. They hoped they should be heard before any vote passed that might reflect on their behaviour, and desired they would take the shortest day for it, since he could not but acquaint them that such an enquiry depending, must needs be a great hinderance to their sea preparations. Mr. King owned the petition was a direct charge upon the Admiralty (which some would have made a doubt of), and therefore, he thought it but justice to suspend all questions till they had been heard. Thursday would have been appointed for it, according to Mr. Churchill's motion, but that the Union Committee sits that day, which is thought a matter not to give way to any thing; so Saturday is the day for the Admiralty.

Among other things the House has sent for, the commission by which the Prince's council is constituted is one; as also the oath that they take for executing that office. Now it is said that this constitution being so new, there is no oath appointed to it, and it is privately observed that they tender oaths to others without taking any themselves. This

looks like questioning the conveniency, if not the legality, of such a constitution, which may be thought the shortest way to put an end to it, without assigning any mal-administration.

The Lords have this day began their examinations upon oath, in relation to the fleet. That, and Scotland, will furnish both Houses with matters enough for heat and animosities, according to the present appearances.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

December 6, 1707.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 3rd. As to the Scotch members, the figure they have made is in points relating to themselves; they have meddled very little with any thing else. We don't see much yet what use they make of the civil law in speaking. It has appeared only in Mr. Moncrieff, who speaks pertinently and short. Sir David Dalrymple is expected in town next week; he is an eminent pleader, and is like to open things clearer as to their constitution than we understand

of it at present. Mr. Bailey is a zealous promoter of reducing all to a conformity with England, supposing every thing practicable, and perhaps not enough considering how consistent his schemes may be with rights and privileges, reserved and made sacred by the articles of the treaty.

We have been to-day in a committee upon the fleet. We had a long hearing again between Rear-Admiral Whitstone and the merchants, which ended as before, without any question upon it. But that being over, after a long pause, which looked like an unresolvèdness what to do, Sir Gilbert Heathcote proposed a question, only in relation to Jamaica, that the losses of the merchants trading thither arise from the delays of appointing their convoys in due time. That not being seconded in time, Mr. Heysham, the merchant who had showed himself before favourable to the Admiralty, proposed another question, that, for the encouragement of trade, besides the ships provided for the grand fleet, there should be a sufficient number provided of cruizers and convoys, which his brother seconded. Those who were for censuring, in the first place, gave way readily to the passing that question; but then proceeded to second the other, which gave occasion

to Mr. Churchill, Mr. Paget, and Mr. Walpole, to justify their Board, and to shew they had employed all the ships they had in reach ; but the extensiveness of the war hindered them from supplying all parts, as it might be done if the fleet went no further than the channel, though they employed 7,000 more than the Parliament allowed for.

Mr. Smith took an occasion from thence to deliver his opinion, that a day should be appointed to consider the state of the fleet in general ; and if there was a necessity of sending a fleet yearly to the Mediterranean, what was fit to be done for the protection of the trade. There was an inclination to go into this expedient, so that the question passed early for leaving the chair, and this committee is to sit again on Thursday.

If there were a design to remove or mortify the Admiralty, it had no great support, there being that division among the Whigs which I need not explain, and none of the Tories appeared to encourage any such design ; on the contrary, the two Hearnss, as well as the Heyshams, declared in favour of the Admiralty.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

December 9, 1707.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 6th. I don't think you can expect to see the Duke of Marlborough very soon, for our House is now upon enquiries relating to the war.

It began yesterday in the angry corner, with motions for accounts to be laid before them; what number of troops were in Spain, in our pay, from the raising of the siege of Barcelona to the battle of Almanza? what officers were absent, either from Spain or Flanders? how the 250,000*l.* given for Spain had been disposed of? and a general account of what has been given for the land forces annually, during the war? and how it has been distributed? Some of these questions seeming to point at the ministry, allow no time for absence.

Whether any more be concerned in them than the first proposers, does not yet appear. We have been to-day in another committee on the Scotch affairs, and have concluded all that belongs to the abolishing the Privy Council. We left off on Saturday upon the article relating to the justices of the peace, that they should have the same power as in

England. It was again shewn that could not be consistently with the twentieth article of the treaty, but they still persisted that one article was to explain another, though it was urged that the heritors took care to preserve those rights entire, notwithstanding any article in the treaty.

They carried their question as nakedly as it was proposed ; however, those that think themselves the best friends, as well to the revolution as the union, believe they are left exposed by it to the insults of the enemies of both, when they shall be deprived of the support and protection of the Privy Council.

They proceeded next to the establishing justiciary circuits, which had no great opposition, it growing late ; and we had a division upon candles, whether we should proceed, which was carried by 89 against 81, only Mr. Secretary Harley advised that in framing the bill about circuits, care should be taken that they be not at the charge of the country. Their last thing proposed was, that the returns of members to serve in Parliament should not be by the Privy Council as in the articles, but as it is in England, by the Sheriffs, many of which being hereditary, is no great remedy against influences.

These resolutions are appointed to be reported on

Tuesday, when the fate of the Privy Council is to be determined, but I suppose not without a division.

We sat till six to-night, because we had a long debate about Mr. Asgil's report; some were for proceeding immediately to censure his book, others were for delaying it till he could be heard according to his desire by letter, and therefore pressed that the matter of his privilege might be first determined, which was carried upon a division of 161 against 154, and it is likely both points will come on, on Saturday. I believe the business of the fleet will give way on Thursday to the Scotch report.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

December 11, 1707.

The report was made to-day from the Committee of the Union. The two first resolutions relating to the abolishing of the council, and settling the militia passed without any debate. At reading the third question about the justices, an amendment was proposed by Sir David Dalrymple, brother to the late Earl of Stair, who is newly come up, in

these words, "As far as it shall be consistent with the articles of the treaty."

I have already mentioned that there were fifteen reserved to the hereditary jurisdictions before the justices could meddle. The debate held till nearly seven o'clock; those that argued for the justices' powers, maintained they did no wrong to the heritors, since they only transmitted over to them the power the council had all along of interposing immediately in matters relating to the peace. It was said, on the other side, that the heritors would look upon it as an invasion of their rights reserved by the treaty; that the Council's intermeddling was more *de facto* than *de jure*, and the transmitting that power, whatever it was, to single and inferior men would be of little use towards preserving the peace.

Sir Joseph Jekyll, and Sir Thomas Parker, who had declared their opinion in the committee for the justices against the heritors, altered their minds upon what had been said by Sir D. Dalrymple and Mr. Boyle, and Mr. Ayres the lawyer joined with them for the amendment. But the Solicitor-General, Mr. King, Sir John Fowles, and Sir Richard Onslow stuck to their first opinions, that the 20th

article was no obstruction to the making justices with the same powers as in England. These and their followers, joining with the Tories, were the prevailing party, and threw out the amendment by 149 against 113 ; by which majority one may judge what a breach there is made among the Whigs, and I wish it does not continue. The rest of the questions passed as fast as they could be read, and a bill is ordered to be brought in upon those resolutions.

The report of the land tax will take up another day, viz., to-morrow, so that it will not be with the Lords till Tuesday, and the Malt Bill will be before the committee on Wednesday.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

December 13, 1707.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 10th. As to what you are informed in relation to some leading Whigs and the ministry, I have seen more of the misunderstandings than of an accommodation, though perhaps that may be wrought in time. We have been to-day in a third committee

upon the Admiralty, and have had the same question proposed again,—that the merchants had proved the allegations of their petition; which had the same answer made to it,—that it was only proved as to their losses. But their charge upon the Admiralty for want of care, had not been made out in any instance, but where it was pretended they had fairly answered that they had not always ships in their reach for all services, but supplied them as soon as they could; so that it was looked upon as a complicated question, and not fit to be put; but if they had a mind to charge the Admiralty, they were called upon to do it directly, and express where the blame lay.

Some facts were hinted at that had been urged by the merchants at the bar, which were answered by the Prince's council, and no reply made to them.

Mr. Hampden was the mover of the question, and Mr. Ward and Sir Gilbert Heathcote supported it. Sir Joseph Jekyll and Mr. King said something to it by way of queries, that looked rather like countenancing the proposers than the proposition.

After some debate, it was soon seen that the question was improper, since the negative might look like discouraging the petitioners, and the

affirmative would lay a censure where they saw no reason for it ; so it passed off with a question for leaving the chair, which was easily consented to, and had but a few negatives to it.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

December 14, 1707.

We have been in another committee to-day upon the Union ; but before we went into it, a motion was made by a Scotch member, that leave be given to bring in a bill for repealing the Act of Security, which is suspended only till the first of January, which is ordered. The gentlemen who are for abolishing the Privy Council, said they intended to propose this repeal in the committee (though intending it should be part of their scheme), but that would be deferring it too long, and it may now pass with the land tax before Christmas.

When we were in the committee, Mr. Hadden proposed two other questions that were thought necessary ; the first was, that the militia of Scotland should be put upon the same foot with that of England : this had no difficulty, but only in the

wording of the question. Some thought our militia upon so ill a foot, that it was fit to be amended, and were afraid that the putting that question might be a bar to it, and therefore would have it worded that the militia of both parts of Great Britain should be under the same regulations. This was thought to have a worse inconvenience in it, for it was intended to frame a new model of militia; experience had shewn how many difficulties that would be attended with, that there was little hopes of seeing any end of it; nor would the concluding on the first question debar them from making any alterations in the militia, provided they were the same throughout Great Britain; so it passed accordingly.

The next point proposed was, that the justices of peace in Scotland should have the same power as in England. These are part of the provisions of securing the peace in Scotland when the Privy Council is removed; this last question was not gone through by reason of the difficulties that appeared; and my Lord Coningsby moved an addition to the question, that the Justices in Scotland should have the same powers, as far as was consistent with the 20th article of the treaty, which is very express for preserving all heritable rights and jurisdictions as they were at the time of framing the treaty.

It appeared in the debates that these heritable jurisdictions reserve all prosecutions to themselves for fifteen days, and what they overlook or neglect in that time the justices may take up, and not sooner. They were aware this amendment was made to shew their justices must be short in their powers, and therefore laboured to solve this difficulty by having recourse to the 19th article, which speaks of jurisdictions that were allowed to be regulated by Parliament of Great Britain; but it was answered, the 20th article seemed to exempt whatever was mentioned therein from any such regulation; and it was owned by some of those that were as friends to the Privy Council, that it did require further consideration. The question was put by consent for leaving the Chair, and this is to be taken up again in the next Committee, that is appointed on Tuesday.

We have no more to do in the committee upon Land Tax, but to insert the committee names, which will be done to-morrow; on Monday we go into the committee on the Malt Bill.

My Lord Grenville died last night, in an hour's time, of an apoplexy.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

December 16, 1707.

The Lords entered yesterday upon the business of Spain, and the Earl of Peterborough was brought on the stage. The Earl of Rochester, Earl of Nottingham, and Lord Haversham, spoke in his favour. The first wondered that one sent abroad with so many characters and commissions, and who had been stript of them all before his return, should have nothing said to him at his coming home. My Lord Halifax is said to have spoken in an ambiguous manner, saying he had seen a book setting forth that noble lord's high achievements, which he thought were not to be equalled but by what is related of Quintus Curtius. Lord Peterborough said something, but not so copiously as he used to do, that he hoped he was to have a hearing one time or another, though he forbore pressing it, that he might not interrupt public affairs. It ended in resolving upon addresses to her Majesty for fuller information in these matters, by laying before them what instructions had been given or sent either to Lord Peterborough, Lord Galway, or Lord Rivers; what

became of the troops after the raising the siege of Barcelona, and of what the army consisted of at the battle of Almanza, with other inquiries that I don't know. This matter is to be considered again on Friday next.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

December 18, 1707.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 15th. Mr. Grahame, who moved the Spanish inquiry, was the Privy Purse. We have no other of that name in the House; he moved again to-day for the putting it off to the 17th of January, after the appointed call of the House. There were other papers moved for at the same time, by Mr. Bromley and Mr. Freeman, which shews they design treating that matter in conformity to their friends in the House of Lords, which looks hitherto towards favouring Lord Peterborough, and laying the blame of miscarriages elsewhere.

The Queen came to the House of Lords to-day, and gave the royal assent to the Land Tax Bill, and the Bill for repealing the Scotch Act of Secu-

city, with another of these Acts.—* peace and war. We passed the Malt Bill yesterday, in a committee; it was reported to-day, and will be brought and engrossed to-morrow.

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MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

December, 20, 1707.

We were yesterday in a Committee of Supply, and resolved upon raising upwards of two millions for the forces in Spain and Portugal; the guards and garrisons in Great Britain 500,000*l*. Part thereof was for the augmentation of forces in order to strengthen the Duke of Savoy, to make good the treaty with Portugal, and other extraordinary occasions of the war, which was not otherwise explained; but there might be services not fit to be mentioned beforehand, as that of Toulon was last year.

These resolutions were reported to-day and agreed to, so that the supplies already granted amount to about 5,400,000*l*., and we have not yet considered

Something wanting.

† I have omitted a part referring solely to Asgill's book.

the estimates of the ordnance for the land service, which is appointed on Monday.

The Malt Bill was carried up to the Lords yesterday, and her Majesty came to-day to pass it. So I suppose they may have adjourned till the 12th of January, as we shall do on Tuesday.

We had not the Scotch Bill yesterday relating to the council. Sir James Montague moved to-day that the resolutions taken in that matter might be put into a bill or bills, which was excepted against at first, till it was explained that no more was meant by it than to make a bill for the militia apart, because that being in the nature of a money bill, if it were joined with the rest might raise a dispute, if the Lords make amendments; so far it was agreed to, to have it in two bills. But the Privy Council and Justices must go together.

The debate, yesterday, in the House of Lords was more remarkable, the Queen being present to hear of the Spanish affairs.

All agreed that nothing should be omitted for the recovery of Spain; but my Lord Nottingham proposed that 20,000 men might be sent from the army in Flanders into Spain, which he thought might be as well spared this year, as the Duke of Vendôme

could detach 15,000 men last year from Flanders ; that he thought it worth being upon the defensive for the regaining of Spain, though that might be helped likewise by the augmentation the Queen had proposed, which he would employ for supplying these detachments.

My Lord Rochester inclined that way, till the Duke of Marlborough opened the state of the war, which he said he had the Queen's leave for ; and he did it so fully, that my Lord Rochester owned that he received great satisfaction from it ; and if they had known sooner how well every thing had been disposed, their debate might have been spared. Then my Lord Somers took an occasion to propose a question that he thought all would agree in, viz., that no peace could be safe or honourable, till Spain and the West Indies were recovered from the House of Bourbon ; which nobody opposing, my Lord Wharton went on to propose an address of thanks to her Majesty, for her care in procuring troops to be sent to Spain, which they hoped would be commanded by Prince Eugene ; as, likewise, for reinforcing the Duke of Savoy, and enabling him to act offensively. It having been opened by the Duke of Marlborough, that the Duke of Savoy's army would

be made up of 45,000 men, and that 10 or 11,000 men were now embarking in Italy for Spain, and more would follow, it was moved by my Lord Halifax, that her Majesty would be pleased to continue her solicitations in the Imperial Court, that their part would be performed both in Italy and towards the Rhinè.

That day could not end more usefully; and I hope it is the beginning of clearing up any misunderstandings.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

December 23, 1707.

Both Houses have since waited on the Queen to present an address prepared by the Lords upon the Friday's debate, and sent to us yesterday for our concurrence.

Mr. Secretary Harley took that occasion to open to us the state of the war; I suppose the same in substance as the Duke of Marlborough had done in the House of Lords, though not in so lively a representation as that is said to be. He told us it was what her Majesty had directed him to lay before

the Commons, when they came upon the consideration of the Spanish affairs, and he thought it not improper then. Perhaps it may prevent, or, at least, abate any peevishness in those enquiries.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

January 13, 1707-8.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 10th. The Lords were again upon the Spanish business on Friday last. It was only managed by four, viz., Lord Rochester, Lord Nottingham, Duke of Bucks, Lord Haversham. The subject was an account given by the post-boy, that the battle of Almanza was fought by positive orders. He was examined upon it, but could name no author, only he said it was a general report; that he had heard it from several authors that came from Spain, but he knew none of their names.

However, some were inclined to suppose it, and grounded it upon the known prudence and wariness of my Lord Gallway, who was loaded with commendations, that the blame might lie somewhere else.

My Lord Treasurer and Duke of Marlborough were not in the House that day; those of the ministry that were there made no replies; but, as I am told, expected to see an imputation first well grounded, and that the observations should be made upon the papers before them, which contain all instructions and orders sent to Lord Gallway. Upon this silence it was ordered to proceed again to-day, but what is done I don't yet hear.

I need not tell you that the Earl of Cardigan took the sacrament at St. James's church on Sunday, and his place in the House of Lords yesterday.

We had another member added to our church the same day,—the Duke of Roxburgh likewise receiving the sacrament, and both their ladies with them.

What we have done in the House of Commons has the air of preparation for business and debates. We have sent for more Spanish papers and accounts against Saturday. We have had the bills brought in for abolishing the Privy Council in Scotland and settling the militia there; and, to shew the importance of them, they are ordered to be read a second time on Thursday, though that be a day appointed for the call of the House, and we have had a motion

to go into committee on Friday, to consider of a more effectual method for recruiting the army.

Mr. St. John opened it, that 15,000 men were wanting for that service, and they were not to be had without the assistance of Parliament, to be raised proportionably throughout Great Britain; either according to the rates paid to the assessment, or by the rate of the militia, or what other methods they think proper.

We have a bill likewise ordered of great importance, for explaining and extending the powers of the Act of Regency, that it may reach to all Britain. It was apprehended, at first, that the whole bill must be enacted over again, which might have made each paragraph liable to the disputes formerly raised, and perhaps to new cavils. But I think it will be prevented by an Act of Confirmation only, with no other alteration than inserting Great Britain instead of England. We have likewise a day appointed, at the motion of a Scotch member, to consider of the Fishery of Great Britain, but it is not yet opened what helps they want for improving it in their parts.

I am just now told that the Lords sat till near seven. The points they have been upon

related to my Lord Peterborough's transactions. It being left to him in what methods to proceed, he desired my Lord Sunderland's letter to him might be read, acquainting him that her Majesty did not think fit to admit him to her presence till he had given her satisfaction in some points specified, as not marching with the troops to Madrid, his not supplying the King of Spain as was directed, his retiring to Italy without orders, and his taking up money there at a disadvantageous remittance.

This he called a charge, and made a very long answer to it, and I hear had not done when my Lord Sunderland desired notice might be taken that he was not his accuser. But that paper was brought thither with many others, by order of the House, and hoped the rest should be read, as Count Gallas' memorials, the King of Spain's letters, &c., which were the foundations for what he writ to his Lordship. Accordingly those papers were all read, and it being late, it was resolved to proceed again on this affair on Thursday next; and Lord Peterborough said, he had many papers to bring which would answer what had been read.

I suppose they are the King of Spain's letters, and some others that Dr. Freind has published.

What this will end in does not yet appear. The four Lords above-mentioned seem to favour Lord Peterborough.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

January 15, 1707-8.

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The Lords have been again upon the Spanish affairs ; they did not sit so long to-day by two hours, and they are not yet come to any conclusions.

Lord Peterborough ran divisions, and was long and perplexed. He pretended to make it appear that every article of what he called the charge against him, was altogether groundless ; and then added, that allowing it to be all true, he would make it appear that it did not affect him at all.

To avoid running in a circle, it was at last proposed, that the articles he had pretended to answer should be taken one by one ; that the proofs to each should be read separately, and his Lordship confine his justification to each particular as it was

† Something omitted.

proposed, that the House might make a distinct judgment of it, if they thought fit.

I think this is the method intended, and the House is ordered to be summoned for to-morrow, at ten in the morning, that they may proceed to business at eleven, which perhaps may bring this matter to a conclusion in a couple of days.

His Lordship has acquainted the Lords that he has supplied the King of Spain with about thirty thousand pounds of his own money. To shew how he came by so much ready money, he says, at his going over he sold a manor in Northamptonshire for eighteen thousand pounds ; that he took up two years' income of his estate, amounting to 8,000*l.* which he borrowed of Mr. Cornish, at six per cent., to which he added 7,000*l.* that arose from his pay of Admiral, General, and Ambassador.

He complained of a book that is newly come out, against his conduct, but I have not seen it yet, which represents him little better than a fool and a coward.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

January 17, 1707-8.

We were yesterday in a committee for recruiting the army. Mr. St. John had, by order, brought in an account of the number that were wanting, which amounted to 19,557, of which 15,000 ought to be provided with the least loss of time, and he shewed that it was not to be hoped for by the late Recruit Bills.

Mr. Brydges made the motion for raising the men by some other method, but expressed none. Mr. Bennet, a Scotch member, seconded him, and added that the men should be raised proportionably in all parts of the United Kingdom.

He being called upon to explain what he meant by proportionably, he said they might take what rule they thought fittest, as the cess or any other.

The cess being named by a Scotchman could not fail of being excepted against, for, that being the rate, they would raise but one man to our forty.

He explained himself, that he did not mean that should be the measure between England and Scotland, but they would be willing to raise their pro-

portion, according to the numbers of men that may be reasonably computed for each Kingdom.

The explanation did not take away the ill impression of the first undigested proposition. The debate being disorderly upon it, to bring it to some conclusion, Mr. Boyle proposed that it should be first agreed what number of men were necessary, and then proceed to consider how they should be raised in the most easy and agreeable methods, and since it was opened that the whole 19,000 would not be wanting alike, that they would resolve upon 15,000 as immediately necessary.

This occasioned a long debate, the fixing of the number being opposed till satisfaction was first given in what manner they should be raised.

Hard names were given to the forcing of men into the service, and it was answered, that if the Legislature had not power over the persons as well as purses of the community, the whole might be run into the extremest danger.

Mr. King, that opposed the fixing of numbers, without first specifying the methods, expressed himself contented, that instead of 15,000, it should be said a sufficient number of men. When this was accepted, another amendment was offered, that the

men should be raised out of those that had no callings or visible way of livelihood which are the qualifications of the present Recruiting Act.

This, Mr. Attorney said, would make what they intended ineffectual, since it might be argued that whoever had arms or legs had a visible way of livelihood.

However, Mr. King offered a further amendment, that the men should be raised according to the methods of the said act. Those who were for an effectual raising the men were desirous to have a question for adding this last amendment to the main question, as not doubting but it would be rejected upon the inefficiency of that act, which the others being aware of, that the rejecting that act would lay aside their former questions about the qualifications that were comprehended in it, and would shift best by themselves; they insisted so hard upon it, that it was allowed them to return to it, and it being late, it was carried without a division.

This committee is to sit again on Tuesday. If the House don't come into a better disposition in this matter, it is to be feared the public service will meet with some great disappointment.

We have been to-day upon the Spanish affairs,

which ended in reading of papers, and then resolving to proceed further on Wednesday next, before which time more papers will be brought in, to complete what is before the Lords.

We had some dispute at the beginning, whether we should confine ourselves to the papers that were first required, which related to the misfortunes at Almanza.* And there were enquiries what troops were there, and how the supplies of men and money were sent to the King of Spain from time to time, which seemed pointed towards the ministry. And they were pressed as proper considerations, that the ground-work of the miscarriages appearing, they could better advise how they might be prevented for the future.

The papers that were moved for yesterday, and presented to-day, from the Admiralty, gave an account of the chief transactions in the year 1705 and 1706, as they were represented in the letters of Sir Cloudesley Shovel and Sir John Leake. The first

* England supporting the Austrian claimant to the throne of Spain, had put the Archduke Charles in possession of Barcelona; he was there afterwards besieged by Philip V. and Marshal Tessé, but was relieved by the Allied Fleet. Philip was obliged to fly, and Madrid itself fell into the hands of the Archduke. A great effort, however, was made by the House of Bourbon: Lord Galway and General Las Minas rashly engaged the Duke of Berwick near Almanza, and a signal defeat was the result.

giving an account of the taking of Barcelona, when the King of Spain was carried thither, and the other of the relief of Barcelona, when the king was besieged in it.

It was endeavoured to let these papers lie some time longer, since they were but newly brought in; and the first motion for considering the Spanish affairs was made in another view; but it was answered, that it would be fittest to consider the whole together, and the preceding years might give them the best lights, how they came to have no better success at Almanza, which was a misfortune, owing to the neglect of the former year, when they lost Madrid, after having been in possession of it six weeks; and the maintaining of that post would, in all probability, have secured the Spanish monarchy to King Charles.

Mr. Walpole went further, and said it would appear by these papers, that the world was under a mistake as to the great conduct of a certain Lord* who had been mentioned in that House, as if every thing that had been done well in Spain was solely owing to him, and all misadventures were to lie at other people's doors.

The papers were then permitted to be read, and

* Lord Peterborough.

great attention was given to them, as far as they went. They don't confirm all my Lord Peterborough assumes to himself, of Barcelona's being taken by his contrivance. The letters shew that his lordship and his council of general officers were bent upon going to Nice to the relief of the Duke of Savoy. That from the beginning they looked upon the difficulties at Barcelona as insurmountable—that they were for embarking immediately; but the King of Spain* declared that he could not leave a people that had declared themselves so frankly for him, but he would rather choose to perish with them; and therefore entreated my lord to think of some expedient how he could assist him; who then proposed the marching with his forces to Tarragona, which the king submitted to, for diverting their embarkation, and a day was prefixed for their march. In the interim they had the good luck to be masters of fort Montjeui. The letters don't say, one way or another, to whom that was owing, but that encouraged them to prosecute the siege, for the carrying on whereof, from the beginning to the end, they had more assistance from the fleet than the council of land officers seemed to think possible, both as to men and ammunition, besides a supply of 40,000 dollars.

* The Archduke Charles.

There were several letters read that passed between the Prince of Hesse and Sir Cloudesley, expressing the great satisfaction the king had in Sir Cloudesley's care of him, and begging he would not abandon him.

One of them mentions how the prince* was still tormented by a lord; and the last of them tells him he had sent Sir John Norris to communicate to him a design he was going to put in execution, which he hoped would give them a better prospect of success. I suppose that might be his last attempt where he fell.

By Sir John Leake's letters it appears, that while the king was besieged in Barcelona, there was no good intelligence between his majesty and his lordship; that the king pressed Sir John to sail immediately to Barcelona for his relief, and to bring with him the soldiers and money that the Queen had ordered. That these advices were sent to Sir John without communicating them to his lordship, which he took notice of in a letter he sent to him, telling him what he suspected the advices were, but he gave him contrary orders to stop first at Valentia or Draia, to land his soldiers and money there, and then sail to attack the French fleet, which

* Of Hesse Darmstadt.

he might better do, not being embarrassed with transports.

These letters go no further than the raising that siege. There are other papers not yet brought in, as Count Gallas' memorial, and letters that passed between my lord and the king, which I suppose open the new scene of what passed since their parting at Barcelona, to the time of his lordship's going for Italy, which I shall mention hereafter.

The Lords were yesterday upon the same business, but made no more of it than before; the reading of the papers, and his Lordship's comments upon them taking up the day. This only was new, that he had got the printers to be sent for, who were printing a book I have already mentioned. It is said his Lordship came at it by his peculiar talent in stratagems. He accosted the printer in the disguise of a French parson, pretending himself a friend of my Lord Gallway's, and having heard a book was coming out that would be a great vindication to my Lord, he offered to translate it gratis into French, which was inducement enough to get a sight of it.

The discovery, as I hear, does not seem much worth the contrivance; for the printers owned, very frankly, that they had the copy from Dr. Kingston;

that they were to give him no more than eight pounds for it: they told him they would not print any thing that should be a reflection on Lord Peterborough. He assured them there was nothing like it, but some inoffensive remarks on Dr. Friend.

I am told it is only the Doctor's book printed over again, with insignificant remarks added to some paragraphs; and that Kingston had sold those very remarks to another bookseller, who was to publish them apart. So that the great book was to be sold for four shillings; and soon after, the little one for sixpence.

However, Kingston was ordered to be taken into custody, but whether he was brought before the Lords to-day I know not.

The Lords have put off the Spanish business till Monday; and to-day they intended to consider the Prince's answer to the representation drawn up by their committee, relating to Admiralty affairs. But what is done in it I have not yet heard.

Mr. Cox moved yesterday for the Droitwich Bill; and it will be ready by Monday.

I hear Mr. Bridges, by a concert in the country, has given way to one Mr. Wythers, standing at Whitechurch.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

January 20, 1707-8.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 17th. We were to-day in a committee again, upon the Recruit Bill, but with no better success. The question proposed was, that the recruits should be raised proportionably throughout the United Kingdom. The debate lasted till 6 o'clock ; at last the question passed in the negative, by eight voices, viz., 185 against 177. Mr. King and his friends joining with the —, carried it ; and when he had done, he moved for reporting their resolution on Saturday ; adding, that for all the invidious reflections that had been made upon them, they would show their concern for carrying on the war, and that the recruits should be more effectual than by any rules of proportion.

I suppose he will move the renewing the Recruit Bill, and add some more useful clauses.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

January 22, 1707-8.

The report was made yesterday of the resolution taken in the Committee about recruits; it occasioned another debate, that took up the day.

Mr. Attorney moved for an amendment, to leave out the exemption for such as had a visible way of livelihood; and inserting, that such might be liable as had no estate, real or personal.

The exception taken to it was, that this might carry away all labourers in husbandry or elsewhere, and would extend to every body's children, where the father's were living and held the estate, whether it was more or less.

It was answered, nobody believed that justices would execute the Act in such a latitude; and to obviate it, any clauses might be offered for restraining all abuses. Some were inclined to come into it, that opposed the proportions; but Sir Thomas Hanmer offering a further amendment, to exempt all that maintained their families by their labour, or had any maintenance from their parents, it passed with little opposition, and a bill is ordered to be

brought in upon the resolution with both the amendments, which, perhaps, will have little better effect than the former bill.

Then Mr. Bromley proceeded to take notice of some abuses and hardships upon soldiers, that had been mentioned in the debates, which being rectified, would give encouragement to the army, such as the selling of commissions, and the ill clothing of soldiers, and defrauding them of their pay; and proposed to begin with the first, that it be an instruction to those who are to bring in the Bill, that they insert a clause to prevent selling commissions.

Mr. Boscawen, opposed it, as an unnecessary reflection; he owned some commissions had been sold, and justified the doing it in cases where officers were worn out in the service, or disabled by wounds; there being no other provision for them, it was a sure compassion to let them sell that. They might have that little means of living rather than continue them their pay, when they were not able to serve. It was replied that all those considerations should be allowed.

But it being objected, they were going to clog a bill that required despatch, if it would be of any

use; and that what they would amend might as well come into any other bill, particularly that of mutiny and desertion: they laid hold of the offer, and waived the question at present, which is like to be revived. It being too late to proceed on the Spanish affairs, which was the order of the day, that is put off till Saturday.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

January 24, 1707-8.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 21st. What you think has been an obstruction to the recruits, is, I hope in some measure, now provided against upon a motion made yesterday by Mr. Attorney.

He took notice of the inclination that had been shown in late debates to forward the recruits as far as it could be done by encouragements; and proposed that the rewards given for the bringing in of men should be doubled. That the constable should have twenty shillings for every impressed man, instead of ten shillings he had before; and the volunteer should have four pounds, instead of two

pounds. This was very well received, and it was added by others, that the soldier should be assured of his discharge in three years, if he desired it. The House came unanimously into an address to her Majesty to give orders accordingly, and to issue a proclamation to require the putting the present Recruiting Act, that will subsist till March, into a more vigorous execution.

It was moved by some, that the Lord Chancellor should take notice of justices that were remiss, but that was disliked as carrying a reflection they hoped was unnecessary, and might raise the pertness of officers to behave themselves insolently towards magistrates, and it was not to be doubted but justices would have due regard to the Queen's directions signified in the proclamation; and to the service of their country.

It was added at the desire of the Scotch Members, that the same encouragements should be given for raising volunteers in Scotland. Nothing could be said of pressed men there, our act not yet extending to them.

It is hoped that this method will be as effectual as the bill intended, or anything else that had been proposed, and will be much more so in respect of

time, which is a great consideration ; for if everybody proceeds roundly, and affectionately in the discharge of their duty, most of the men may be raised and sent away before a new act could come down into the country.

Mention was made of the abuse in discharging men for money, and excepting against their stature, and the general has otherwise heard so much of it, that I don't doubt but the officers will be better instructed for the future.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

January 27, 1707-8.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 24th. I never heard that any body was in the least suspected of encouraging the writing of remarks. The man's* necessities are so well known, and that he has had no other means of subsistence for many years, that I think nobody enquires after any other motives.

The Council have despatched the letters to the Custoses. I suppose one is belonging to your Grace ;

* Dr. Fisher.

and you will see it as pressing as the occasion requires, which, if considered by the Justices, may do some good. This is a national service, that I hope will not be neglected, upon pretence of officers misbehaving themselves in any kind. Their equipages may be a mark of their vanity, but none of their riches. It is but a short life with many of them, and their making it a little merrier is more to be indulged to them than any others.

As for foreign troops, it was enough pressed by those who I think are under a mistaken notion, that it is against the liberty of the subject to be obliged to go to the army, when necessity and the service of their country requires it. But it was answered, there were no such troops to be had, more than what we and the Dutch were in treaty for. Besides, the recruits wanting were for filling up the regiments of our own, and restoring those we lost in Spain, whose officers are still surviving, and don't deserve such treatment as to be broke while there is occasion for their service.

We had the new Recruit Bill brought in and read. It is drawn up with the powers of the former. Perhaps in the progress of it there may be some endeavours used to alter the descriptions of persons

to be exempted, which standing as the committee resolved them, that bill is thought the worst of the two.

We were yesterday in a Committee of Ways and Means. The East India Company made their proposal in writing of advancing a million, if fourteen years and a-half be added to their term, to make it up, without any new fund for interest, so that instead of eight per cent., which they now enjoy, for six years and a-half for two millions, they shall have but five per cent. for three millions. Mr. Dolben and Mr. Lowndes made another calculation for them to bring it up to 200,000*l.*, more, and that is left to them to consider of, which if they come up to, I reckon that is a bargain made. Though the Scotch said something of an equivalent for them, or the books to be opened for a new subscription, which was fully answered by telling them they ought to be well satisfied with a proposal for supplying 1,200,000*l.* in a way they contributed nothing to, since the East India Company's was only paid by England.

I find it still a question whether the Company will come up to this addition, they are not fond of their own proposal, and indifferent men think they have made no great benefit by the trade, nor are like to do while the war lasts.

We were in a committee to-day upon the bill about cruisers. Mr. Hampden being in the chair, who pressed going into this committee, by reason (as he said) that the Admiralty of Great Britain was so destitute of council.

The blanks in the bill were filled up, that there should be forty-three cruisers appointed besides convoys which was the number in a former bill in the King's time. Their rates are to be six third rates, twenty fourth rates, thirteen fifth rates, and four sixth rates. I wish we knew where to find men for them and the grand fleet.

Mr. Ward offered a clause for the encouragement of the sea service, that a greater reward should be given for the taking of ships from the enemy, by which our men of war are to have the encouragement given by the Dutch to their privateers, viz., 5*l.* per man for as many men as the enemy had on board when he came out of port, and 5*l.* for each gun of three-pound ball, which 5*l.* is to be augmented in proportion to the ball, that a nine or twelve-pounder is to pay nine or twelve times as much, and this to be paid immediately by the treasurer of the navy.

There was another clause for obliging the cruizers to do their duty by requiring the commanders in

the ports or the new erected superintendants to keep a distinct and exact account of every ships' cruize that comes within their cognizance, and to lay the same yearly before the Parliament.

The Lords sent us a bill, that was read yesterday, for the increase of seamen ; that was near rejecting, there being a division about the second reading, which 108 opposed, but it was carried by 137.

The exception to it was, that it begins with the repeal of an act, made not long since, for the benefit of the coal trade, upon account of some abuses by those who take able seamen to their apprentices. If the bill can be retained, it must undergo many alterations.

It is said that Gregg is reprieved, and is like to be transported ; how it comes to pass, I know not, but it is reported his master was for his being executed.

We are told an express is arrived from Spain with good news, but that you will have a further account of from a better hand.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

January 29, 1707-8.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 26th. We were this day upon the Spanish affairs, which lasted till three o'clock.

After the papers were read, there were some things started to the commendation of my Lord Peterborough, but that was not the design of the day, which was opened by Sir Thomas Hanmer in very smooth gentle terms, but still shewing a dislike to the management, which he took notice was only prosperous when we were least concerned. He taxed a great neglect of Spain, and that Portugal was fed with money without any care, whether they performed their part of the treaty.

There were insinuations made as if we had neglected making peace last year, while there were good conditions offered agreeable to our successes, and now our affairs were grown worse. We thought to carry on a war by addresses.

For remedy of the ill state we were in, he thought it necessary a representation ought to be made of

the true situation of our affairs, and it was not to be doubted but her Majesty would rather hearken to the advice of those, that upon all occasions, have shewn their readiness to supply her with money, than to such as are always taking it from her.

And for the method of proceeding, he proposed a question, "That it appeared to this House that of 29,000 men the Parliament had given money for, the last year, for the war in Spain and Portugal, there were not in either place at the time of the battle of Almanza above 8600 men.

This was grounded upon the account of those forces that Mr. St. John had brought in, but he explained that it was the best account he could gather from the officers that were in town, but that reached farther than the question, which referred only to effective men, without including officers. Besides which, there were some prisoners and some sick in hospitals, and in the number of 29,000 men were included four regiments that are since gone to Portugal, with other remarks, which I don't so well remember.

However, the question was very much pressed, and there seemed to be another question to follow it of mismanagement and misapplication of money,

that the whole sum should be sent into Spain for the payment of so few troops.

Some were desirous to know what the question drove at before they could agree to it.

It might have an ill effect to publish to the world that we had no regard to our quotas, and if we were next to take notice, as had been hinted, that the Portuguese were wanting in the numbers we contributed to, it would expose ourselves, and provoke others to hearken to contrary measures, when they found their doing their utmost gave so little satisfaction.

For diverting this question, another was proposed for adjourning the debate till a clearer information might be had of the number of troops, and that was only carried by 15, the division being 187 against 172, which was a full house at this time of night.

Sir Joseph Jekyll that pressed adjourning the debate, moved for the bringing it on again on Tuesday, saying he was for the enquiry, and going to the bottom of it to know whether the public money had been misapplied, which is bringing the matter into a larger debate, and I hope will end in the vindication of those who have served well, and create a better understanding than has been of late.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

January 31, 1707-8.

The report was made to-day, from the committee of ways and means, about the 1,200,000*l.* to be raised by the East India Company.

The same objections were raised again, that two millions might be had, but by what means was still in the dark; only Sir John Erskine, a Scotch member, said they might have 200,000*l.* more added to the twelve, by admitting a subscription of North Britons, for a proportionable share of the trade, to which it was replied, all they could hope for from thence was, to have no part of the 1,200,000*l.*

However, a question was raised and insisted on, for adjourning the debate about receiving the report, and there was a division upon it. It was carried against adjourning by 202 against 149; when the question passed quietly for agreeing with the committee. There it must rest till it can be seen what the East India Company will do upon it. They have summoned a Court to meet on Monday; but, by what some particular members of the Company say, it will meet with some difficulty among them.

Many of them did not well understand, before, where their advantage lay, in consenting to so great a reduction of their present interest in their funds ; and others are shocked at the manner they are treated in, as if they were the pest of the nation, and the corrupters of all the boroughs.

If the Co—— were remarkable formerly for espousing the interest of the East India Company, the case is quite altered now, for, in this division, the majority were pretty entirely W——, except two or three members of the old Company.

After this, we went into a committee upon the Regency Bill ; and went through it : Sir Joseph Jekyll being in the chair. There was no alteration made in it, but one or two in favour of the Scotch.

By the former Bill, the Lords Justices in the time of the Regency, were tied up under the pain of treason, from consenting to any repeal of the Acts of Uniformity. It is added, at the desire of the Scotch, that they should be as much tied up from repealing the Act, passed in the last Session of Parliament, for establishing the Presbyterian Church in Scotland. Another thing they scruple is, in the oath appointed by the Act for abjuring James the Third, and maintaining the *limitation* of the succession. They

owned the word limitation was misunderstood among them ; some interpreting it to the form of government, particularly in the church which they are jealous of, and otherwise mean as they do as to maintaining the succession, or therefore would have limitation of it stand explained by subjoining “on the entail of the succession.”* But they were still better pleased with leaving out both limitation and entail, as was proposed by Sir James Montague, who thought that maintaining the succession did fully enough comprehend all that was meant by the other words, which was easily assented to, as the Scotch say these two points, so easily obtained, will give great satisfaction to them, especially to the Presbyterian ministers, who had gravelled themselves upon this last nicety. As they think nothing could contribute more to fix the whole Presbyterian party in the interest of the union, or give them a better idea of the fair intentions of a British Parliament.

The Lords have been this day upon the Spanish affairs, which was spent in reading more papers brought by Lord Peterborough, and his large comments upon them.

* Having found this sentence unintelligible, I have so left it, rather than attempt to mend it at my own fancy.

I hear they are letters from the King of Spain, and others to his Lordship; and I think are produced as a confutation to Count Gallas's memorial.

It is appointed to go into a committee on Wednesday next, to consider of the general state of Spain, and the same papers are referred to it, which may keep it a little longer in the way of information.

The Lords read the bill about the council on Thursday last, and have appointed the second reading on Tuesday next; if they intend any amendments in it, I suppose they will then be opened.

They sat long that day in a committee upon Captain Kerr's business, and finished a report to be laid before the House, that the complainants against him had fully made out their allegations.

I hear there were seventeen dissenting Lords, whereof fourteen were his countrymen, and the other two absent, the other three were the Duke of Bucks, Lord Torrington, and Lord Carmarthen. The number of those that agreed to the report were twenty-seven.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

February 3, 1707-8.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 31st past.

The House has been to-day upon the adjourned debate concerning the number of the English troops that were in Spain or Portugal at the time of the battle of Almanza, which lasted till near eight at night.

Mr. St. John brought another paper to explain his former, which shewed there could be no reckoning made upon the foot of 29,000 men that could be said to be in Spain at the time of the battle of Almanza, though the Parliament had provided the pay for that number. The battle was fought in April, and it was but the 16th of January before that the House voted 8000 men more on the Spanish establishment, which made them up 29,000, and they could not be raised and transported as soon as April. It is true my Lord Rivers arrived at Alicante in October preceding, but his troops only completed the numbers that were in Spain before, which had been about 22,000, but were reduced by death and several accidents; and to make up that number,

six of his regiments were entirely broke into the other corps, and the officers sent home to raise new ones.

Besides, Montandre's whole regiment were made prisoners a little before the battle of Almanza; the like had befallen some other troops. Besides, in the 8660 they were reckoned effectives, exclusive of commission and non-commission officers and servants, which are allowed to be fifteen in each company, nor were there included such as were sick in hospitals,

However, all the House would alter in their calculation was adding the officers and servants to the effectives.

This was pretty generally agreed to after Sir Joseph Jekyll explained, that he meant no more by it than to lay it before her Majesty, in an address desiring her Majesty to order an account to be brought to them, how it came to pass there were no more troops in Spain at that time; and that she would be pleased to take care that the war might be carried on effectually in Spain.

Some excepted to that part of the address for another account to be brought before them, as foreseeing it would but be the same again,

Others opposed the address till they had first considered what defects were in the quotas of Portugal, which they would likewise take notice of in the address. That was put by reason they had no account yet how those matters stood in Portugal.

They say they had addressed for it, and none being sent, they might conclude there were great defects there, that might divert great sums.

There was no inclination to provoke Portugal, and by any hasty resolves to drive them out of the alliance, therefore the question passed for the address as at first proposed.

Then it was resolved that the address should be presented by the House.

It was moved to appoint a committee to draw it up, but it was not agreed to, since it might occasion another day's debate by words that might be inserted. So this nice point has ended in the best manner it was capable of, and it is hoped the accounts her Majesty shall send, may in a great measure qualify the hard constructions that the first vote might occasion.

When the House was rising it was moved to appoint another day to proceed in the Spanish inquiry, but they had more mind to adjourn.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

February 5, 1707-8.

There has not been much in the House of Commons these two days, only they were in a committee yesterday on the Annuity Bill, which was reported to-day and ordered to be engrossed. I suppose it will be sent to the Lords on Saturday, and may be ready for the royal assent on Tuesday. There being present occasion for the money, if the Queen be hindered by the gout from coming to the House, it is like to be passed by commission.

There was a clause offered to-day to enact what my Lord Treasurer had ordered already ——*, that no names should be taken as money received before the act was passed; there were two divisions about bringing up the clause, and the second reading. But it was carried by a majority of ten or twelve; the end of it will be a terrible crowd, and the stock-jobbers are like to make themselves the strongest.

We took the report to-day of the bill for appointing the forty-three cruizers, to which a clause is added, that seamen ought to look upon it as a great

* A word wanting.

encouragement for coming into the fleet, since it gives them the entire benefit of all the men-of-war and privateers they shall take from the enemy, together with 5*l.* per man for every man that was on board an enemy's ship at the time of their engagement, which is to be paid by the Navy Board in the course of their payments.

The Lords were yesterday upon the Spanish affairs, which are still hung upon enquiries. Lord Peterborough has now put them upon hearing witnesses, two were examined yesterday, viz., Colonel Bisset and Brigadier Hamilton, who answered some questions of his own, as to his care and activity. They say there are many more to be produced. On the other side it has been proposed to hear what the sea-officers have to say, and accordingly a message came from the Lords to-day to desire leave for our three to attend them, Trassborne, Byng, and Jennings, which is allowed, if they think fit. Some think this enquiry is industriously spun out, that the Commons may make the first deduction concerning that lord's conduct.

The Lords have been to-day upon the bill for determining the Scotch council, the peers being summoned to attend. I have heard very little of

what they have done, but I think they have not altered the period we had set to the council.

A petition of Mr. Hegner's was presented to-day complaining that he had been arrested as he was prosecuting his petition in the Droitwich business, and desired the protection of the House. It is referred to the committee of privileges and elections. I think the arrest came from a brother-in-law, or some near relation, who was drawn in to be bound for him, and left in the lurch.

Mr. Cox and the rest talk of going on with their bill, but fresh petitions are brought against them. One was delivered to-day by Mr. Richard Onslow. I begin to be in doubt whether they will have any better success than the last year.

Gregg was not executed yesterday, so that I know not what is to be done with him. He may lie till next session, which follows upon the end of the next term.

The Queen has been attended to-day with an address at Kensington. I did not go thither, supposing it would be accompanied by the promoters of it, so I don't know her Majesty's answer.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

February 7, 1707-8.

Mr. Arden was so kind as to call upon me, I am glad to understand by him that your Grace was in good health, and that your building went on pleasantly.

The Droitwich committee met yesterday ; I hear the petitioner's counsel is to be heard on Tuesday, when I shall attend, if the Annuity Act do not pass that day. If that should, one must be shut up all day in the Exchequer.

The Lords had a long debate on Thursday about the Scotch council, whether they should be dissolved the first of May or the first of October. It was carried for the day already fixed in the bill by 50 votes against 45. It was chiefly argued by my Lord Treasurer and Lord Somers, who were of different opinions. All the Scotch lords, except three, viz., Roxburgh, Montrose, and Tweeddale, were for their continuing till October.

The Duke of Argyle, who has been thought to favour the soonest determination of the council, did not vote for it. He declared his dislike of the bill,

as not having clearly and sufficiently secured the heritable jurisdictions. Of the Bishops then present, there were only two who voted for the longest day, viz., Winchester and Oxford. It was observed the Bishop of Ely withdrew from the question. The Earl of Rochester took no part in the debate, but voted for the shortest day. The Duke of Bucks argued for the dissolution, saying, he understood both sides thought the council a nuisance, and there ought to be no question, but a nuisance should be abated immediately.

So the bill was read a second time, and passed the committee the same day without any amendment.

Yesterday being the birth-day, the House sat only till two o'clock to dispatch some things that were of course.

This day was taken up with Captain Kerr's business, the House was in a committee upon it, Sir Richard Onslow being in the chair. The Captain and his accusers were called in, and when they had opened their charge against him, though it was the same he had heard before the Lords, yet he desired time to make his defence, pretending his witnesses were some of them at Plymouth, and some of them prisoners in France. There is but a short time

given him, to Wednesday next. His countrymen begin already to shew their concern for him.

It is spread all over the town that Mr. Secretary would not hold the seals long, and several reasons are assigned; but these are depths I don't enter into.

The grand committee for the courts at law met this evening, which they say is the first time since the Parliament of 1641. Mr. Manby was called to the chair; then my Lord Buckley opened against Mr. Serjeant Hook, insisting on the former presents, and fining a mayor where they were not given; and at his motion three weeks' time is allowed him to make good his charge.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

February 10, 1707-8.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 7th. Mr. Secretary Harley has been the public theme these two or three days. It seems the dissatisfaction rises so high between him and the ministers, that both my Lord Treasurer and Duke of Marlborough acquainted her Majesty on Saturday,

that they could not serve any longer with him, and his removal being in suspense, they forbore coming to the cabinet council on Sunday. Her Majesty sent for the Duke of Marlborough to Kensington on Monday morning, and at his coming back to the House of Lords it was soon spread abroad, that the seals would be sent for, which I suppose is done to-day.

The Lords were then upon appointing a committee to go to Newgate, and there examine Gregg. It was resolved to do it by balloting. The seven appointed are my Lord Steward, the Duke of Somerset, and Duke of Bolton, Earl of Wharton, Lord Townshend, Lord Somers, and Lord Halifax.

Upon the first report of my Lord Treasurer laying down, many of the members had resolved not to go into the committee of ways and means that day, so that the day was spent in business of little moment.

Mr. Secretary was in the House a little while, and delivered a message or two at the bar from her Majesty, recommending the case of the Londonderry people, which he moved should be referred to a committee, and made this observation upon it, that it sometimes happened those who served the public

best were least considered, and soon after he went away.

You may hear more from other hands of the occasions for these changes than I can do; but one is publicly spoken of, that messages have been carried as from the Queen to several leading men among the Tory party, to engage them to stand by her Majesty against the Whigs, whose management she was dissatisfied with, and no less with the influence they had upon her ministers.

This is laid to the charge of Mr. Attorney and Mr. St. John, but more particularly the latter, so that they are looked upon as a triumvirate that were framing a new scheme of administration, and Mrs. Hill, the dresser, is said to be engaged with them in the project. She is now known by the name of Mrs. Masham, having married last summer a son of Sir Francis Masham.

We have been in a committee to-day upon the Recruit Bill, and gone through it. The description of the persons liable to be enlisted is again altered somewhat for the better, the former words about personal or real estate, and the visible way of livelihood, are left out, and instead of them is inserted those may be liable who make no use of a lawful calling.

The number of justices requisite to put this act in execution is reduced from three, as it was before, to two, the service having been often disappointed for want of a third justice.

A penalty is now passed of 5*l.* upon the parish officers that wilfully neglect their duty in obeying the justices' warrants for taking up qualified men, one moiety whereof goes to the informer, and the other moiety to the poor of the parish where the offence was committed.

The 4*l.* bounty money is continued to the first of May, and from that time to the end of the year forty shillings only is to be allowed to the volunteer.

Some clauses will be added upon the report, one is to tie up the officers from discharging men that are enlisted.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

February 14, 1707-8.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 9th. You will wonder to see it come back to you, with your former letter, till I tell you, that I suspect they have both been opened before they came to me,

and I should be very glad to have your opinion upon it. I was a little surprised to find them open so easily without tearing the paper, and it happening thus twice together, I looked more narrowly into it, and I imagine the wafer must have been cut through by half of it sticking on each side of the paper, and then they were closed together by wetting them, and pressing them bunglingly with thumb nails. I shewed them to Mr. Arden, who does not think they came so out of your hands. Whether any letters I have sent to your Grace have been treated in the same manner you will best judge. I must own I never thought any correspondence with your Grace would give occasion for jealousy, and I should be glad to find this a wrong surmise.

We have a new Secretary of State, that I hope will give a general satisfaction, as well for his probity as abilities. Mr. Harley delivered up his seals yesterday, and her Majesty gave them to Mr. Boyle the same night. He has already chosen two new under secretaries, viz., a brother of Mr. Walpole, who went secretary to Mr. Stanhope into Spain, and Mr. P——, who went lately secretary to my Lord Raby at Berlin, and is very well qualified for it.

The act of qualifications requires Mr. Boyle's

being new chosen again into the House of Commons, which I hope will not keep him out above ten days, and he will have no competition at Westminster.

When Mr. Harley came yesterday to the House of Commons, Sir Thomas Mansel was with him without his staff. They both had been at Kensington to resign their employments, and Mr. Harley told some that were near him, he had asked leave for Mr. Attorney and Mr. St. John to wait on her Majesty, which was appointed for this day. They have likewise resigned; Mr. Attorney went to Kensington in his gown, and came back to the House in his coat.

How these vacancies will be filled is variously conjectured. But it is believed Mr. Speaker will be Chancellor of the Exchequer when the session ends.

Whether the committee of lords have been to examine Gregg I know not. They have been again upon the Spanish business; but it is still spun out with papers and comments.

Captain Kerr's examination was finished yesterday, and the committee concluded, as the Lords had done, with an opinion, that the complainants had made out their allegations.

We had a hearing at the bar to-day upon a bill depending about the river Taane in Somersetshire. Opposition being made to the new tolls that are requisite for making that river more navigable. There were many petitions presented from both sides, so that it appeared like a party cause between Whig and Tory; the first for the bill, and it was carried for committing it by 204 against 149.

We had likewise the reports of the Recruit Bill and the Bill for appointing Cruizers, both which are ordered to be engrossed.

The Lords acquainted us by message that they had passed the Annuity Bill; so it will have the royal assent to-morrow by commission.

My attendance at the Exchequer will keep me from the Droitwich hearing.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

February 17, 1707-8.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 14th, and am glad to find there was no foul play in the letters I returned. One ought the rather to believe it, since it can be so little accounted for why

there should be otherwise. I can't but say that the little gentleman who is gone off the stage was almost capable of filling the whole world with suspicions.

I am glad to think that Mr. Boyle's changing his place did not arise from his own seeking, but in compliance with his friends, who judged very rightly that nobody else would have been near so acceptable.

We did a great work yesterday in the Committee of Ways and Means, having resolved upon another million to be raised by annuity, after Mr. Lowndes had proposed for the Lords the remainder of the *windown** money, after the Bank's being paid their interest for Exchequer bills, together with part of the subsidies after the year 1700.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

February 19, 1707-8.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 16th. It is probable the Duke of Marlborough will be going over about the middle of March, and by that time all the bills of supply will be brought in, and put in some forwardness.

* So written.

I don't doubt but you have the votes sent to you. Those of yesterday contain something remarkable, as introducing the ballot upon questions relative to elections, it may be hereafter carried further, and how convenient that will be to a court and a monarchy, time will shew. We had a division about sending those votes, called standing orders, to the sheriffs, that they may be communicated to the boroughs. But it was carried by 142 against 147. It was not understood what was meant by this communication to people without doors, that had nothing to do in these matters. How far it is intended to guide elections, I know not; but it was called an —* of ordinances to be sent over the kingdom by a single authority.

It was afterwards moved that the Speaker should be chose by balloting; but Mr. King, who was chairman of the committee that brought in these regulations, said, he had not heard before of that motion, and thought time ought to be allowed to consider it, which stopped it for the present. But it may be taken up again when the method of balloting comes to be reported from the same com-

* This word is illegible.

mittee ; it was hinted at that it should be by balls, and not by writing. We are to have a specimen of it this day se'nnight at the trial of the election of Ashburton.

You will see in the votes the Queen's answer to the address about the English forces that were in Spain at the time of the battle of Almanza. Though it be appointed to be considered on Tuesday, yet I question whether it will be the business of that day, since it was moved this morning by Mr. Bromley, that our address should be renewed to her Majesty, that we may have an account of the number of troops in Portugal, and of the sums that have been remitted thither, in order to examine, no doubt, how well that treaty has been complied with.

This day was spent in affairs of another nature ; the bill for preventing bribery and corruption in elections was reported and ordered to be engrossed ; some clauses were added for excluding almsmen and men in hospitals from votes, &c.

A bill was read the third time, and sent up to the Lords, for the benefit of expectant heirs, that they be not wronged by concealing the death of those they are to inherit after.

I hear the Queen was at the House of Lords

to-day incognito, to hear a debate upon a bill brought into that House by my Lord Somers, relating to the Bishop of Carlisle, and jurisdiction over his chapter. But they say it is the case of many more cathedrals, that being of royal foundations, pretend to be thereby exempted from episcopal visitations. I don't hear what determination it has had.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

February 21, 1707-8.

The Committee of Ways and Means made an end yesterday by raising the remaining 749,000*l.* upon the grand mortgage, the term whereof is prolonged accordingly. The resolution was reported this morning, and a bill is ordered to be brought in upon it. That committee will, however, sit again; but it is only to lay a small duty on Irish yarn, to adjust the proportion between the English and Irish spinners, that both may get a livelihood.

Mr. Benson reported to-day the manner of balloting, which was received with laughter, but yet was agreed to. It consisted of several articles: first, that a balloting-box and balls should be provided;

that it be carried about by the two clerks, one having the box, the other the balls ; that the Speaker appoint two members to attend the box ; that the member voting take a ball in his bare hand, and hold it up between his finger and thumb, before he put it into the box ; that the members keep their places till the box be brought back to the table, and the balls there told over.

There was a division upon the first resolution, and it was carried only by 108 against 98.

Mr. Boyle was chosen this morning again to serve for Westminster, without any opposition : being obliged to attend him, I could not get back to Westminster till the Droitwich Committee was up. I hear they are like to sit more days, which is no good sign for the bill.

There was a council yesterday at St. James's, for the laying an embargo in order to man our ships. I am told that we have thirty-five that will soon be in readiness.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

February 24, 1707-8.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 21st. Major-General Stanhope and Lieutenant-General Earle had an opportunity to do the public good service, by giving an account how matters stood in Spain; that by my Lord Gallway's conduct the enemy was kept from making that progress there was reason to fear after so great a defeat; and if he was supported, they might hope to see a happy turn there: they owned that we lay at too great a distance to send regular supplies of men thither, and therefore the proper methods were now fallen upon to engage the German troops from Italy.

Mr. Boyle, and some others, pressed the danger of such a question, that was pointed only to confirm the former opinion of our troops not exceeding 8600 men in Spain, which appeared not to be true in fact. However, they pressed their question, and we divided upon it, but it was carried in the negative by 230 against 145. Immediately after my Lord William Pawlett proposed an address of thanks to her Majesty for the measures she had entered into for the

recovery of Spain, and for her employing the foreign troops in that service, which was carried without opposition, and the whole House is to attend with it.

I hope a very nice troublesome business is well over, and it is the last contest we shall have this session. Some talk already of getting into the country.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

February 26, 1707-8.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 23rd. What has been most considerable in the House of Commons these two days is, that yesterday some Scotch members moved for altering the course of paying the equivalent from what the Scotch parliament had put it in; but it was rejected as a matter that is put beyond control. To-day we had the election of Ashburton, which was decided for the sitting member, by way of ballot. I think the project is not like to last. It was found very tedious, and people would rather know who and who is together. The first question that the counsel withdrew upon was, where the right of election lay, which was

carried in favour of the sitting member by 139 balls against 141. Upon this, the petitioner's counsel gave up his cause as being no longer maintainable.

The next question, therefore, whether the sitting member was duly elected, was determined in the old way, every body being on the wing, and resolved against the fatigue of a second ballot, which lasts above an hour, and nobody must move in that time, whatever the occasion may be.

I hear the Lords have had a report from their committee of the observations they had made, and formed into an address upon the Prince's answer, which they are to present to the Queen. The Prince's council are not much spared in it. It is thought the report will be made to-morrow from the committee of seven lords.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

February 28, 1707-8.

We had a pretty long debate to-day about the bill contested by the Bishop of Carlisle on one side, and Dr. Atterbury, his dean, on the other. But we carried it for committing the bill by 168 against 136,

and the committee is to sit upon it on Thursday. It will still be endeavoured to be clogged, and to that end the statutes of the several churches concerned are ordered to be produced, as also the charters of the new erected cathedrals. It is a party cause, and the Whigs are on the Bishop's side. In the division all the Scotch members went out with them.

We presented our address to her Majesty yesterday, which was well received. Her Majesty telling us that the satisfaction we expressed in procuring foreign troops for Spain, was extremely acceptable to her.

The Lords are to present their address about the Admiralty on Monday next. It is supposed some alterations in the Admiralty may ensue, and I hear my Lord Pembroke talked of for returning to that post again.

I hope our alarms begin to abate upon so many ships being got together. Sir George Byng writ yesterday from the Downs, that he was going to stand over to the coast of Dunkirk that afternoon. He was in a readiness for it the day before, but the wind was not favourable.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

March 2, 1707-8.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 28th past.

I can't say there has been much done in the House of Commons these two days. We have been in a committee to-day upon the American bill, which is for the encouragement of privateers and men-of-war in the West Indies. The prize-office will be suppressed there when this bill passes, and the captain will have the full benefit of what he takes, if condemned as a lawful prize. The committee have gone through the bill, and it is to be reported on Saturday. I don't know but it may miscarry for want of time.

The committee of Courts of Justice sat last night till midnight upon the complaint of the Lord Buckley against Serjeant Hook. They were heard by counsel, and several witnesses were produced on both sides. The cause was confined to the single case of the judge's pretending to the usual present of half a ton of coals, price seven shillings and sixpence, from the town of Beaumaris, at the time of

the grand session there. It was proved he expected it, and the mayor was fined 20*l.*, who had procured an order of the corporation against it.

But I thought it was made out on the judge's side that he looks upon it as an ancient right, that had been paid time out of mind, and he thought it a wrong to the Queen, as well as his successor, to depart from it; and in the dispute about it, the mayor treating him disrespectfully he fined him, but afterwards took it off. However, the committee came to two resolutions: the one general, that it was an arbitrary and illegal act in a judge upon his circuit to demand a present; the other was particular, that my Lord Buckley had proved his complaint against Serjeant Hook for demanding a present at Beaumaris, and fining the mayor for refusing it.

We had a division on the last question, which was carried by 79 against 60. It is to be reported to the House, where it may be altered again, rather than pass so severe censures for trifles, or where there is more appearance of an error in judgment, than in any corruption.

The Lords presented their address about the Admiralty yesterday. It was but slenderly attended. I hear her Majesty gave a general answer, that the

navy of England was of great concern, and it should be her care accordingly.

If any alterations are to be made in the Admiralty, they are not yet spoke of.

This day the Duke of Somerset has made his report to the Lords from the committee of seven. It seems there have been many and long examinations taken, since he was two hours and a half in repeating them. They have not entered into the consideration of them, but have referred it to a committee to make extracts and observations to be laid before the House.

I am told it runs much upon supposed correspondences with France. There is mention made of letters sent thither from the Secretary by owlers and other conveyances, with directions that if they met with any English ships, the packets should be thrown overboard and sunk ; and his recommendations, as occasions offered, were received and complied with in a particular manner.

You will have it from the Gazette and other ways that our ships are before Dunkirk, where they are making a real preparation ; but I hope we are better provided than they imagined.

If their great ships, that were still in harbour,

did not come out on Sunday, or yesterday, the high tides would be spent, so that they must wait for the next, and in that case it was thought our ships would be coming to the Downs.

I don't hear that Gregg has made any discoveries, but still continues to say that the devil and his necessities were his prompters.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

March 6, 1707-8.

I received yesterday the honour of your Grace's letter of the 3rd.

We hear no more of the intended invasion, but I hope we are every day better prepared for it.

The Plymouth squadron, under the command of Captain Walker, joined Sir George Byng yesterday morning in the Downs: they are composed of one ship of 70 guns, four of 60, five of 50, and two of 32 guns.

I suppose the fleet may be sailed again this morning for Dunkirk.

The Lords and Commons presented their address yesterday to her Majesty. Her answer was reported

by the Speaker to-day, which expresses a gracious acceptance of the address ; and I need say no more of it, supposing it will be sent you this night in print ; as also the proclamation that was resolved last night at council, containing the particular injunctions that are usual upon these occasions.

The Earl of Leven, Governor of the Castle of Edinburgh, is gone for Scotland, with an officer or two of that nation who are members of our House.

Methinks the gentlemen who have been so eager for the early dissolving of the Council of Scotland, don't care to hear of it now.

We had read the Annuity Bill the third time to-day, and passed it. It will be carried to the Lords on Monday, and perhaps may have the royal assent on Wednesday. The American bill was reported to-day, but some other clauses being found necessary, the finishing of it is deferred till Wednesday.

We were yesterday in a Committee of Ways and Means, and laid a duty of two-pence per pound upon Irish worsted yarn, for the benefit of our poor spinners, especially in the west ; but it was opposed, as keeping up the price of the woollen manufacture to the prejudice of our foreign trade, so that it was not carried without a division of 90 to 70.

We shall have another Committee of Ways and Means, to lay a duty upon ropes imported in favour of our own manufacture, with some additional duty upon brandy, to help our own distillers.

There does not seem to be so much pressing now to conclude the session : if the alarm continues, no doubt we shall continue sitting beyond Easter.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

March 4, 1707-8.

We have been this day till seven o'clock upon a very serious matter. Mr. Secretary Boyle brought a message from her Majesty, containing the advices sent over by Major-General Cadogan from Ostend, relating to the French preparations at Dunkirk, where the Prince of Wales was arrived, and about fifteen battalions ready to embark, under the command of the Marquis de Gaese ; but the Duke of Berwick was likewise expected there, and it was given out their design was for Scotland, where they had friends, and hoped the castle of Edinburgh would be delivered to them.

On the other hand, Cadogan writes he had got

the battalions in readiness, with transports for their embarkation, and that he had given notice to the States, who were preparing their ships with all diligence. These reports had been but indifferently received hitherto; but now every body was really affected, or appeared to be so.

Mr. Annesley first made the motion for an address of thanks to her Majesty for this communication, and to assure her Majesty they would stand by her with their lives and fortunes, against the pretended Prince of Wales, and all other enemies, both at home and abroad. It was added by others, that her Majesty would please to take care of her royal person; that she would order the laws to be put into execution against papists and non-jurors; and that she would give orders for securing the arms and horses of those that were disaffected. That they thank her Majesty for her care in providing so good a fleet in so short a time, and likewise acknowledge the concern the Dutch have shewn; and they conclude with assuring her Majesty, that no attempt of this kind should deter them from prosecuting the war with vigour till the Spanish monarchy was restored to the House of Austria, and the liberty of Europe was secured.

A committee was appointed to draw up the address immediately, and the Lords were desired to continue sitting, that it might be communicated to them for their concurrence.

Mr. Boyle reported the address, which being agreed to, my Lord Hertford carried it to the Lords. They soon after signified their concurrence, and that they had ordered the white staves to know her Majesty's pleasure when they should attend her. It is not to be doubted but it will be to-morrow.

The House of Commons have proceeded further to order a bill to be brought in for suspending the *habeas corpus*, as was done in the last reign.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

October 30, 1708.*

Some friends of your Grace have desired me to let you know that the contest between Sir Richard Onslow and Sir Peter King, for the Speakership, seems inevitable; and Sir Richard thinks he may find friends enough in one and the other party to enable him to carry it. If your Grace be of opinion

* Several letters are here apparently wanting.

that he is worth supporting, it is not doubted but you will give him your good word, which may be of great use to him.

I don't doubt but you hear, from other hands, that the Queen got some rest last night, and applies herself already to business.

Mr. Burchel attended her Majesty at noon, with Admiralty papers to be signed. Her Majesty executing that office at present as it was done for some time by King Charles.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

November 4, 1708.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 1st. I don't doubt but you are satisfied as to the mourning, by what you see in the Gazette and other prints: it is to be as solemn as for the late King and Queen. I suppose the funeral will be pretty early next week. I don't doubt but the day was resolved by a select committee of the council, that met this morning for the second time.

It was once thought the Queen might remove to Hampton Court while her apartments at St. James's were hung in mourning. But I find it now believed

she will make use of that part of my Lady Marlborough's lodgings, which is so near adjoining.

As to the Prince's family, it is believed their salaries will be continued to them in full, which amounts to about 16,000*l.* per annum.

When I see Sir Richard Onslow I shall let him know your Grace's esteem for him. It is given out these two days that he is to have no opposition, there having been an accommodation made among the great ones ; but upon what terms is not yet said. But all that wish well to the public will have a satisfaction in seeing an end put to strife, though we neither know how we came into it, nor how we got out of it.

Since you are pleased to enquire how much the better I am for the bath, I wish I could give you any good account of it. It gave me some relief, but I expect the winter's fatigue will put one quite back again.

In the meantime, I use the Bath waters here ; so far as to supply all malt drink, and I think it the better of the two.

I hope my Lady Duchess has found a more lasting benefit ; and you will pardon the liberty I take of assuring her Grace of my most humble respects.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

November 6, 1708.

It was resolved yesterday at the Committee of Council, that the Prince's funeral should be on Saturday next. They would have had it sooner, but other requisites could not be got ready. The body is to be removed to the painted chamber on Thursday night.

The enclosed is the last order of the Earl Marshal in relation to coaches; as to dress, it is with crape hat bands, and cuffs upon the coat sleeves.

My son is informed that the Prince's servants are to have their whole salaries continued; but an exception is made to such of them as are members of the House of Commons, as these allowances being now to be paid as pensions would put them out of the House.

I need not tell your Grace that it gets now into discourse, as if my Lord Pembroke would be desired to return to the office of Lord High Admiral; and in that case the Earl of Wharton would have the Lieutenancy of Ireland, and Lord Somers the Presi-

dentship of the Council. I don't hear that my Lord Pembroke is yet in town, but he is expected on Wednesday next.

The Queen has had a cold by some change of her dress, but I hope it is pretty well over.

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